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MR. DUNTON'S INVENTION

And Other Stories

BY

JULIAN HAWTHORNE

Author of "A Fool of Nature," Etc.

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MR. DUNTON'S INVENTION.

CROSSING Broadway, opposite the post office, I jumped to get out of the way of a galloping wagon-horse, and collided violently with the shoulder of a big man in dingy gray clothes, who was striding up town. He turned upon me with a sort of large, slow indignation, and the next moment we were laughing and shaking hands. It was Charley Northam. He looked bigger, paler, and more impenetrable than ever. Northam is always hiding something, or has something in reserve; not that anything in his circumstances makes reserve necessary, but he loves mystery for its own sake, and enjoys luring you on to

investigate. His small gray eyes contemplate you with a smile of repressed superior information. His speech and bearing, outwardly courteous and even deferential, are inwardly satiric. He cultivates a subtle vein of mockery, and has a stock of cynical phrases, which he repeats *à propos des bottes*. His general purpose is to be impressive—to command attention and to be waited for. In other words, Big Northam is always posing.

Big though his bodily manifestation is, he is so cunning and agile of mind that you must be quick indeed to put your hand on him. Brains he has in abundance, but there is an odd bias in him; he affects queer company, and meets with outlandish adventures. Sometimes it pleases him to play the anarchist, and he will attend Herr Most's meetings and shout and shoulder about and declaim on the abolition of wealth and the religion of humanity. At other times he is an art critic and connoisseur, with books and pictures of inestimable rarity to show you. Again, you will find him immersed in the peaceful avocations of commerce, or, dropping in, by way of an experience, at the Bowery Theatre, you will behold a stout, pale man fiddling away industriously in the orchestra, or, it may be declaiming from the stage. But it would take

long to paint the full-length portrait of Charley Northam, and we have other business in hand just now.

After shaking hands he tucked my arm under his own, his big fat elbow pressing against my ribs, and drew me along with him.

"Have you—er—satisfied the cravings of the inner man?" asked he, in his quasi-jocose vein. It was between twelve and one o'clock, and New York was plunging to and from lunch.

"I was just thinking of it. Let us go to Marco's. There's a quiet table there, and first-class Burgundy at a dollar a bottle." But Northam smiled in a superior way and shook his head.

"No; we shall be sure to meet Bloomer there, and you know how many kinds of an ass he is. Come with me. I will show you something. I'll introduce you and stand your sponsor. Do you know—have you been initiated at Sam's?"

"Sam's?"

"I thought so. And yet, I suppose, you profess to know your New York. Why, my dear friend, Sam's is *the* place in town. It is the Mecca of interest and adventure. Sam and I are old pals. Why, this will be the biggest kind of a treat for

you. For character, human nature, plots, you don't need to go outside of Sam's. Six Cent Sam's is a world."

"It doesn't sound expensive, anyhow. Where is it?"

"Place yourself under my guidance. Ten minutes on the L and we are there. I am delighted to be the means of bringing Sam and you together. It may have results."

"What is Sam? A man, or a place?"

"Both, emphatically both. The place is as famous in its way as Delmonico's. For that matter, Del's is vulgar, compared with it—vulgar, sir. Del's entertains the Upper Ten, and makes them pay through the nose for it. Sam entertains the world—and it pays them."

"A good deal of a crowd there, is there?"

"By no means. No, not the world as to numbers, but as to quality. He brings together the heights and the depths, affluence and penury, the patrician and the plebeian."

"All for six cents?"

"All for six cents," echoed Northam, with his patronizing smile. "Of course, that's more or less figurative. You pay six cents to get in. Unless Sam likes your looks, though, you don't get in at

any price. Your six cents entitles you to certain privileges—a seat at a table, bread and butter, soup, coffee, or milk—a meal for a king. But you may command what more your purse will buy. You are subject to certain rules, as to drunkenness, noise, and so forth. Sam is an autocrat—a despot—the only absolute one I have ever known. But he is always beneficent. He is a man and a mystery."

In pronouncing these words, Northam lowered and deepened his voice, and glanced at me portentously.

"A mystery, is it? What sort of a mystery can—"

The train was approaching Bleeker street, and Northam, laying his huge hand lightly on my arm, murmured:

"We are here."

When we were in the street, I repeated:

"What mystery—"

"Ah, a mystery as *is* a mystery," he rejoined. "Thoroughly shrunk, clear wove, a yard wide, none other in the market. To begin with, you are to know that nobody knows who Sam is. Sam is his name, and no one knows any other name of him. None knows who or whence he is. There

are some who will tell you he is a prince in disguise; others have it that he is our coming dictator. He is everything, and he is nothing—nothing but Six Cent Sam. Call him, if you will, a mixture of Saint Paul and the devil. I can tell you no more. You must judge for yourself. We turn to the left. Here we are. Keep hold of my arm."

I had not been noticing just where we were going. When we entered Six Cent Sam's door I could not have said what street or avenue it was on. We stepped into an enclosed porch, which was glazed as to its upper portion, and had an aperture therein for the reception of coin. Looking through the glass panel, I met the glance of an eye—quick, masterful and penetrating—which held mine for a moment, and then the lid of the aperture slid back with a click. "Put your fare in," said Northam. "It's against the rules for me to pay for you. Everyone on his own bottom, or not at all, here. A cent and a nickel—all right. Enter."

The door slid on its grooves, and we went in. There was nothing at first sight remarkable in the look of the interior. The man with the masterful eyes stood or sat in a box close to the door, and, by means of a spring, worked the money aperture

and the door itself. The room beyond was forty feet long, with a passageway down the center between two rows of stalls, each containing a table and benches. The guests were screened from one another, but, by an arrangement of mirrors, it was possible for the proprietor from his place to see the interior of every box, and knew what was going on in it. There were two or three quiet, elderly waiters, and the place wore a sober, respectable aspect.

"My friend, here," said Northam, presenting me to the proprietor, "is one of the right sort, and will be an acquisition. Anything going on?"

"You might try the third box this way," replied Sam, in a deep, muffled voice. "You know Dunton? You are welcome here," he added to me. "You will soon catch our style. Hope to see you often."

I bowed, and the audience was over. But I felt that in those few moments my host's eyes had seen further into me than most eyes do. Northam drew me along, and we approached the entrance to box three.

"One word," said Northam, suddenly facing me with half shut eyes, and resting his hand on my shoulder. "It's a rule here that any guest may

offer to treat another, but if the offer is accepted the guest is bound to entertain his host with a true story of his adventures. Am I understood? Very good. Now, this Dunton is an inventor. He has met with a rather odd misfortune, and a few weeks ago he laid his case before Sam. You heard what Sam said just now?"

"Is this a private detective agency, or what?" I demanded.

"I told you just now that Sam is a mystery. I say no more at present. Let us open negotiations with Mr. Dunton. This way."

We entered the box, where a thin, middle-aged man sat sipping a bowl of soup, into which he had crumbled some bread. He looked up at Northam with a courteous gesture.

"Good morning, Mr. Dunton," said the latter. "Know my friend, here. He is one of us. Now, let me enlarge your order by, say, a juicy sirloin and a bottle of Beaune. And how comes on the great case?"

"You are very kind; be seated, gentlemen," said Dunton. "But I should say," he added, "that there is nothing new as yet in my matter."

"Nothing new to you and me, perhaps, but all new to our friend here. Refresh his thirsty ears

with your narrative. The steak and fixings will be here immediately."

Mr. Dunton gave me a momentary, intent glance. His fine, sensitive face showed more intellect than will, and there was in his eyes an abstracted expression indicating an emotional nature. There were marks of grief and disappointment on his countenance, yet an occasional uplifting of the brows indicated a man not altogether beaten.

"I think I may speak before you," he said, after a little hesitation. "Are you, perhaps, interested in the advance of electrical science, and such things?"

"I am more interested than informed. I am a good listener."

"Most astonishing business I ever heard of," remarked Northam, "if *that's* any significance," he added, sniffing through his nose, and nodding his head ominously.

"All we inventors are trying to get at what lies behind electricity," said Dunton. "Electricity is a result of a precedent state, and it seems probable

that this precedent state is itself the Supreme Force in nature—the direct material analogue of the Creator."

He had an agreeable, highly-modulated voice, and his earnestness bred attention. There is a touch of the poet in every true inventor.

"Now, sir," he continued, "I am one of those cursed with a yearning to penetrate into the inmost shrine of the Temple of Isis, and I am comparatively indifferent to the allurements of the outer courts. All that the divine hand has made is good, but I am drawn to the secret spring of waters, and heed not the rainbows and thunders of the cataract. For is it not from the small and silent that all things truly great proceed?"

Northam shook his head humorously. "The larger the bottle, the greater the inspiration," quoth he. "And, in good time, I spy our inspiration coming toward us, with the steak hard upon its heels. Don't mind me, Dunton; you know my way. I am a barbarian, but I appreciate."

Dunton smiled faintly, and went on, addressing himself more particularly to me. Meanwhile Northam tested the temperature of the Burgundy and filled our glasses.

"I needn't give the details of my conception," said Dunton; "they are technical, and what you want, I take it, are the drama and the passion of the story. And that brings me to say that at the time I finished formulating my great idea, I entered into bonds of betrothal with a young girl, the daughter of a physician in the town where I lived. I cannot speak of my feeling for her. Recall your own deepest experience, and it may help you to understand me. Nor can I tell you of her beauty. She absorbed me; I could not see her as I saw other women. I was too near her for that. How old a man do you think me, sir?"

Surprised at the abruptness of the question, I I looked at him and answered, "About forty," though he really looked older than that.

"I am twenty-eight," he said. "Three years ago, I was twenty years younger. It has all come upon me through her."

"Didn't I say it was astonishing?" put in Northam, with the air of a proprietor. "Here, try this bit of steak; it won't stop your ears, nor his tongue, either."

"I don't say she didn't care for me," went on Dunton, whose thin blood the generous wine had warmed. "I have thought it out a hundred times.

I believe she did not know what was intended till it was too late. But you shall judge for yourself. Her father had some knowledge of science; he was older than I,—as old as I look now,—a man of the world, and a fascinating man. I had no concealments from him. I discussed my invention with him constantly, she sitting by, watching and listening. He comprehended the greatness of the idea, and the stupendous results that would follow it. He flattered me and encouraged me. Perhaps even he intended no treachery then. Evil as well as good comes to men, they know not how. The seed finds its proper soil. It flowers in a night, and the sinner or the saint stands revealed to himself and others.

"I was troubled with a nervous affection and the doctor was treating me. He was a man of advanced notions, and had studied the methods of the French school, which is attempting to employ hypnotism as a curative agent. My disease failed to react to the customary treatment, and he finally asked me to let him try the effect of hypnosis. I was a good subject, but at first I was a little shy about submitting myself to the trance; one does not like to surrender his will, even to a friend. However, I finally consented.

"To the surprise of both of us, he failed. It may have been due to the lack of some temperamental sympathy between us; at all events the only effect upon me was a rather unpleasant excitement. He was visibly annoyed. 'I am still convinced you are an excellent subject,' said he. 'I'm not the right operator for you, that's all. It's a pity, for I'm sure it would benefit you.'

"Then the girl came and stood over me, and put her hand on my head. 'You are tired out,' she said. 'Go to sleep and forget about it. Sleep, my love, sleep.'

"A cool, soothing influence flowed along my nerves from her touch. I felt composed and refreshed at once. I closed my eyes while she continued to pass her soft fingers over my hair. I felt that I was falling asleep, but it was like no sleep that I had known before. It was like the parting of soul and body in a happy death. Her spirit seemed to accompany mine on its happy journey. We left the earth behind us; and I knew no more.

"When I came to myself I was lying on a sofa in an inner room. The doctor sat beside me. She was gone. 'That was a lucky chance,' he said. 'You responded to her influence immediately. You

are better already. You will owe your cure to her. Strange we shouldn't have discovered her power before now. Perhaps love has something to do with it.'

"I certainly felt better than for many months. The treatment was continued from day to day. I had no reluctance in yielding to her gentle power.

"I should have told you that my invention was delayed by reason of a process—a problem that I could not solve. It had seemed a trifling thing at first, but the more I investigated it, the more vital did it turn out to be. It was the hinge on which the whole matter opened; in other words, it was the secret that science has been seeking from the beginning. I had penetrated further than the others, but I was still outside the shrine, and the door that was closed against me seemed the most impregnable of all."

"Now listen to him—just listen to him," muttered Northam. "I say nothing—not a word; but just you listen to him, that's all," and he refilled our glasses.

"One evening," continued Dunton, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, "we had been talking about the nature of the effect of hypnosis upon the brain. The theory commonly accepted is, as you

know, that it is in the nature of an inhibition of the cortical centers—a shutting-off of certain faculties, notably that of self-determination, thereby placing the subject under the control of the operator. But this theory fails to account for certain observed phenomena in trances; there seems to be, if not actual initiative on the subject's part, at least something strongly resembling independent mental movement. And the doctor espoused an hypothesis yet more advanced.

"He recalled cases in which the subject had shown mental powers in a trance superior to those possessed in the normal state, and he drew a novel conclusion from this fact. 'Hypnotism,' he said, 'instead of shutting up or crippling the mind, liberates and expands it. Take a great orator, for example: when he is surging forward on the waves of eloquence, carrying all hearts with him, when he loses consciousness of himself in the grandeur of his theme, is not he self-hypnotized? The speech over, he cannot recall what he said; he has touched a height beyond the reach of art—has spoken words he never could have spoken in cold blood, of design aforethought. Contrast with him the man who rises for the first time in his life to make an after-dinner speech. Self-consciousness paralyzes him;

his own voice is strange in his ears; his thoughts refuse to flow; he is bound hand and foot by that metaphysical Ego which is the tyrant and curse of humanity. He is in his normal state, and that—and not the condition we call hypnosis—is truly the state of inhibition. Or look at the poet who has written an immortal poem. He tells you that the verse was found not made; it came to him—he did not consciously compose it. When he found it, he had forgotten himself; and when he returned to himself he marvelled at what he had done. I tell you, genius itself is the faculty of self-hypnotization, and not only that, but I am convinced that hypnotism may produce the effects of genius in those who, in the normal state, are commonplace. A man may slumber all his lifetime, and awake only in the free world of trance.'

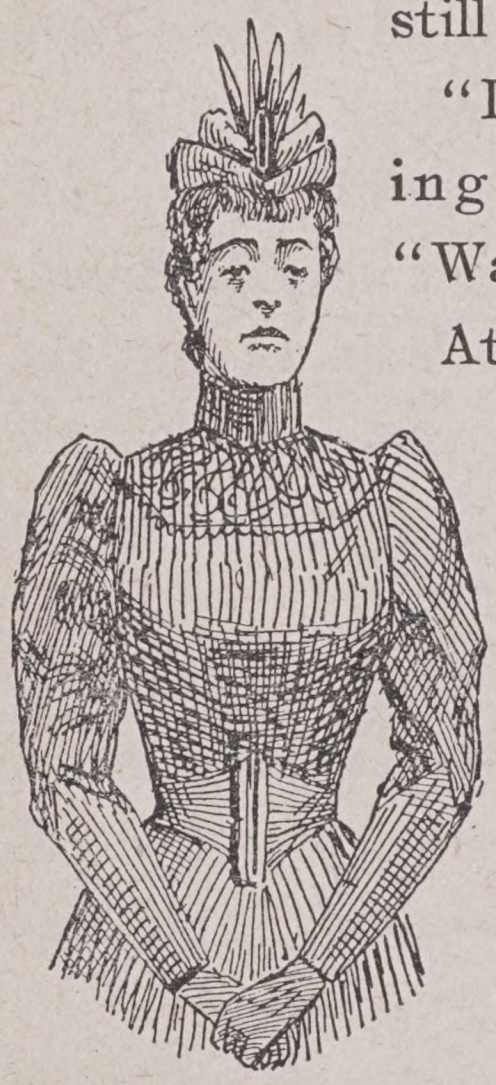
"'That is not a theory to flatter one's vanity,' I answered him, 'but you may be right. I wish that through the trance I might get insight to solve my problem.'

"He laughed and our talk ended. The hour for my daily treatment had come. She entered, and in a few moments my soul was elsewhere. How long I remained unconscious I have never known. I awoke in my own house, and alone. I was unable

to recall what had happened; some command of oblivion seemed to have been laid upon me. I could not even recall the face or the name of the woman I loved, or of the doctor. For a time I was separated from that region of my life, and could not find my way back to it. I suffered from a vague distress and anxiety which I could not explain to myself. For a week this blankness continued, and then, all at once, memory returned. I went immediately to the doctor's house, but the blinds were closed and no one answered the bell. On inquiry, I learned that the doctor and his daughter had left town several days before.

"I will cut my story short," added Dunton, emptying his wine glass. "What my heart endured you can imagine. I could find no trace of them, nor could I understand the reason of their disappearance. But one day a friend told me that an invention similar to mine had just been patented at Washington. I was not long in getting to the patent office. There I was shown the model and specifications. The invention was my own in every detail, but the problem that had defeated me was solved. For a time, I was bewildered; but at length the truth dawned on me. While I was in the trance, they had led my mind to my

invention, and I had been drawn on to solve the problem. The doctor had thereupon appropriated it, and fled. Had he been alone, I would have pursued him to the bitter end; but it was she who had wrought the evil. I loved her; I love her still; and—I have done nothing."



"Didn't I say it was astonishing?" murmured Northam. "Waiter, bring the other bottle."

At this juncture Six Cent Sam appeared, with a lady.

She was young, fair, very pale, and dressed in black.

"Dunton," said Sam, "this lady wants to speak to you."

Dunton looked up in surprise; then passed his hand over his forehead, and cried:

"Helen!"

"He is dead," she said, in a low, husky voice. "I have come to give you back your own. But, oh, Edward, I did not know what he meant to do. Can you forgive me?"

"Let's leave the young folks alone, gentlemen," said Sam to Northam and me; "they have other problems to solve besides the one you've just been hearing about."

We were four in the club smoking room that October afternoon. The weather was gusty and inclement, and we were out of sorts. Perhaps our having been up till two or three o'clock the night before may have had something to do with our gloomy sensations. Twelve hours had elapsed since we had left the card table, and permitted yawning Thomas to go to bed. We had dispersed to our various abiding places, slept till noon, and drifted back to the club and breakfast. Hardly anyone besides ourselves was in the house. It was intolerably dull. What is one to do in town at three o'clock of a rainy October afternoon, after being up all night?

Allardice, the man-about-town *par excellence*, lay languid and relaxed in his easy-chair, his legs outstretched, his chin on his breast, and a black Mexican cigar between his teeth. [His prominent gray eyes were half closed, some cigar ashes lay unheeded on his vest, and the light from the window was reflected dimly on the bald summit of his cranium.] Tinling, the poet and dramatic critic, reclined on the divan, his gray, abundant hair contrasting oddly with his smooth pink-and-white face; the hand with the big seal ring on it lay romantically and conspicuously on his heart. Gawtrey sat with his elbows on his knees, and his face between his hands, the small eyes in his big fat countenance blinking stupidly at the fire. He and Tinling had been wrangling about the merits or demerits of the new Persian dancer who had been attracting the town for some days past, and who was being advertised, free and otherwise, to a degree unexampled. Tinling had declared that she was "the peer—I do not say of Ellsler or Taglioni, but of Salome, the daughter of Herodias." Gawtrey had replied that he had never seen the Herodias girl, or the other two, either; but that he could find women in any ordinary music hall, here or in London, who could knock the stuffing out of Mlle.

Saki. Thereupon fell a silence, finally broken by Allardice.

"If no one else will, I suppose I must," said he, leaning forward and touching the electric bell in the panel. "Think of what it's to be, gentlemen."

We sighed and changed the position of our legs.

"There should be a by-law specifying the correct drink for each hour of the day," said someone. "Up to eleven P. M., at any rate, it's too fatiguing to choose for one's self."

"You might always order the same drink, you know, like Greaves," suggested Gawtrey. "Grand Vin Sec is his tipple, and he never touches any other."

"Gawtrey has no discrimination," murmured Tinling. "Greaves has a hundred thousand a year, youth, health and happiness."

"No rose without the thorn," said Allardice. "He's going to get married."

"That's a pretty cheap article of cynicism, even before dinner," rejoined Tinling. "In the first place, the girl comes of one of our best families. Baddely was a name famous in the old country centuries ago, and always respected. Secondly, Miss Baddely is a mighty fine girl, both in looks

and otherwise; and fifthly and sixthly, and to conclude, Greaves is dead in love with her."

"The Baddely, is it?" grunted Gawtrey. "Why, they don't amount to a row of pins! Met the old boy downtown. Ain't worth a hundred thousand."

"The greater her good sense, to look with favor on Greaves' suit," was contributed by Allardice.

Tinling closed his eyes. "You weary me," he said. "She's the most independent girl I know. If anything could make her jilt Greaves, it would be precisely his income. If Greaves were poor, she'd support him. She thinks women ought to support themselves, anyway."

"What can she do for a living?" someone inquired.

"What couldn't she? Anything,—from keeping a dancing school to running an American railroad system. She's got genius."

"That's the reason Greaves didn't join us last night," remarked Gawtrey. "When a fellow gets gone on a girl, he may as well resign from his clubs. But I wish he'd given me my revenge first. Never saw anything like the hands that fellow held last time. Two flushes and a four-ace were some of 'em."

"What is yours, sir?" inquired the pale but ever respectful Thomas, appearing at this juncture. Whereupon we all wearily began to try to think of something.

In the midst of our deliberations, in came Fred Guise, looking quite pale and haggard. He nodded to us without speaking, and dropped into a chair.

"Just in time," said Allardice, "and you look as if you needed it. Ask Mr. Guise what he'll have, Thomas."

"Absinthe cocktail," said Guise, without faltering. "I'm knocked out. Haven't seen the color of a bed since night before last. None of you chaps have heard anything new about him, of course?"

"Guess not. About whom?"

"Greaves, of course. Did you think I meant the Shah of Persia?" inquired Guise, with a fine irony.

"All we know about Greaves here is, that he promised to be here last night and didn't materialize," said Gawtrey, with a yawn. "He owes me my revenge—"

"Do you mean to say you chaps haven't heard?" interrupted Guise, sitting up and speaking slowly, as if astonishment weighted his utterance. "Why it's nearly a day old!"

"Is its father known?" asked Allardice, languidly.

"What's the matter, Fred?" demanded Tinling, struck by something peculiar in Guise's manner. "We've only just got up, you know, and you're the first man that's come in since—"

"Why, good God, the man's disappeared," exclaimed Guise, always in his characteristic low but distinct voice. "He vanished like the blowing out of a candle! He was with me one moment, and the next, he was—well, he was gone!"

"I say," grunted Gawtrey, "draw it mild. What are you giving us?"

"What are the circumstances? How disappeared? When? Where?" put in Tinling, erecting himself, and shaking back his long gray hair.

"Why, I supposed the report would have got here the first thing. It's the most inexplicable thing I ever came across. Let me see—to begin at the beginning, I'd breakfasted with him in the forenoon yesterday at his rooms. He was quite jolly—rather more so than usual, I thought. I took it for natural high spirits—going to be married soon, and all that sort of thing, you know. But I've thought since it may have been excitement from some other cause, you know. He talked a bit

about his private affairs,—we're pretty intimate, you know,—but nothing was said in particular that I remember. We talked of the Ingledew's ball, and that escapade of Mrs. Revell's, you know, and that Mlle. Saki, the Persian dancer,—whom he didn't seem to think much of, by the by,—and of the gold-find in Alaska; he said he thought that looked promising, and that he might like to take some stock in that; and then—"

"For pity's sake, do tell us the story first, and we can join you in your comments afterward," someone exclaimed. "Get to the point, can't you?"

"I was only trying to recall anything that might possibly throw some light on the thing, you know," rejoined Fred, unhurriedly. "I can't make out any motive for it myself. Everything was all right about him—property, health, love affair—well, everything. And it's inconceivable to me that he could have planned anything beforehand—to make away with himself, or anything of that sort; but then it's even more inconceivable he should have vanished involuntarily, don't you know. I can't make it out," and here Fred accepted the absinthe cocktail that Thomas silently

extended to him, and emptied it with deliberate circumspection.

Allardice elevated one eyebrow, and hunted in his pocket for a cigar. "Take your time, my dear boy," said he. "We've got the afternoon before us, and we're none of us curious. Won't you take another absinthe before you continue?"

Guise leaned back in his chair, seemed to consult his memory, and finally went on:

"Well, after breakfast, you know, we lay about for a while, looking over his books and pictures, and talking philosophy and art. Toward three or four o'clock—just about this time, you know,—we agreed to go out for a little stroll. It looked as if it might rain, and Greaves put on a light gray Mackintosh overcoat, that he'd just had over from London,—rather a peculiar looking thing it was, by the by,—and a soft felt hat, and out we went. We turned into Broadway, and walked on the west side up past the hotels toward Thirty-Fourth street. There were comparatively few people out. I remember we passed a long file of those sandwich men, you know, with Persian turbans on, and boards with Saki's portrait on them. She's at the Fifth Avenue, you know. Just as we reached the corner of Twenty-Eighth street, we came

across a bit of an excitement. There was a man running down the middle of the street, with his hat in his hand, and making good time; and about a dozen yards behind him were a couple of bobbies. Greaves and I stopped on the corner, to see what would happen. Greaves said he was a fool to run in that direction, because he could never get across Broadway. The bobbies thought so, too, I fancy, and it threw them off their guard. Almost at the entrance of the street the chap turned like a flash, and dashed straight at them. Before they knew where they were he had tripped them both and sent them sprawling, and was flying up the street. Half way along the block there's an empty house, going to be torn down. The basement door was open and he went through it, and that was the last ever seen of him, I fancy. I turned round to Greaves, who had spoken to me, you know, just the instant before,

and saw him across the other side of Broadway, walking on toward Thirtieth. There he was, you know, in his gray mackintosh and soft felt hat. I hurried to catch up with him, and took his arm. I said, 'He was no fool, after all, that chap. I fancy he must have played on a football team.'

"That's what I said, and then Greaves pulled away his arm and turned round on me, and you may imagine I was surprised when I found it was n't Greaves at all, nor anyone a bit like him. It was a fellow of fifty, with a stubble of gray beard a week old, a red potato nose, and one eye gone. 'I beg your pardon, young fellow,' he said to me, 'I guess you've made a mistake.'

"Well, you know, at first I did n't think so much of it; I'd been misled by the similarity of dress, that was all. Greaves must be somewhere, of course, and close at hand, too; it was hardly thirty seconds since he'd spoken to me, and there were only three directions in which he could have gone—up Broadway, or down or up the side street toward Fifth avenue. If he had gone down the street toward Sixth avenue I should have seen him, for that was the direction I'd been looking. But the Broadway sidewalks in both directions were nearly empty, the crowd having run down Twenty-

Eighth after the fellow and the bobbies. There was nobody going toward Fifth avenue either, and he couldn't have got away more than a dozen rods, anyhow. I should have recognized him at any distance in that gray Mackintosh. It was true, he might have gone into some shop, so I looked into all of them up and down the blocks, but it was no use. Unless he'd dropped through a manhole in the pavement, there was nowhere he could have gone; but he was gone just the same. There never was a disappearance on the stage managed quicker or neater, or half so inexplicable. I began to feel mighty queer about it—something as if I'd seen a ghost. Here was an effect without a cause. I assure you it was as unpleasant a shock as ever I had in my life."

We all stared at one another. At last Gawtrey said:

"See here, Fred, make a clean breast of it; how many bottles of the Grand Vin Sec did you polish off at the breakfast?"

"I'm entirely serious, gentlemen," returned Fred, gravely; "and recollect, even if Greaves could have eluded me in any ordinary way, he would still have been heard from somewhere by this time. But he's given no sign. Whether he went voluntarily or

not, he's vanished, and I'm afraid when news does come it will not be the sort of news we shall like to hear."

Gawtrey now poured his pony of brandy into a tumbler, added a dash of water, swallowed the mixture, looked in the bottom of the glass for inspiration, and said, "I don't believe, for my part, that Greaves has been kidnapped in broad daylight in the center of New York; and on the other hand, I don't believe in miracles—this year, anyway. What he did, depend upon it, was just to step quietly out of sight somewhere, when you weren't looking. Probably he saw Miss Baddely on a horse car, and boarded it to join her."

"There's something in that idea," said Allardice.

Guise shook his head. "There wasn't, as it happens, a single car passing, for there was a block across both tracks at Twenty-Fifth street. And as for Miss Baddely, I afterward ascertained that she was at home at the time. No, gentlemen; ordinary explanations won't work. Last evening, I went down and had a talk with Inspector Byrnes, and he has put two of his best men on the case. But they had found out nothing when I looked in at Headquarters just now.

"You called on Miss Baddely, did you? How does she take it?" inquired Tinling.

"I saw her father; she was not to be seen. Of course they are all upset. I told him all I've told you. He said one thing—the old man did—that struck me as a bit odd; he said that both his daughter and Greaves were persons of arbitrary will and extraordinary whims. They were capable of almost anything. If one of them did a crazy thing, the other would be apt to do something to cap it. He said he had no control over either of 'em, and never had had. But he said this last business did surprise him. I thought that was queer language to use on such an occasion. It might mean that he suspected something."

"A quarrel, for instance, and desperation on Greaves' part."

"A wager of some kind, maybe."

"I never did think much of that fellow Baddely. He's a poor sort of an old dude. Where does he get his pocket money from? He never made a cent in his life. Should n't wonder if his daughter supported him somehow. Takes in sewing on the quiet, or paints fans, or gives music lessons. Rum things go on in some of these old families." It was Gawtrey who made these observations.

"Upon the whole," said another of the party, "it looks to me as if Greaves' kidnapper must have been Greaves himself. But how he arranged it—the circumstances being what they were—I can't figure out. My impression is, Guise should have followed up that fellow in the gray Mackintosh."

"I agree with the last honorable member," said Tinling. "Such a coincidence as that similarity of costume is too remarkable not to be suspicious. Looks like a plot of some sort. But there's nothing to throw any light on his motive."

"Let's have another drink," said Gawtrey. "What are we going to do this evening."

"I am going to the Fifth Avenue to see Saki," said Allardice. "Your talk about her has aroused my curiosity. I saw some oriental dancers at the Paris Exhibition a while ago, and I'd like to see how she compares with them."

The evening papers had just been brought in, and I had picked up one of them. A paragraph headed "Illness of the Persian Dancer" caught my eye.

"She won't appear this evening," said I. "It says: 'Mlle. Saki was so unfortunate as to sprain her ankle yesterday while alighting from her

carriage. While the injury is not regarded as serious, it will prevent her from dancing this evening. Tickets purchased in advance will be accepted for later dates."

"Nothing in the paper about Greaves?" asked Tinling.

"Seems not."

Soon after we broke up, and drifted away in various directions, somewhat preoccupied with speculations about Greaves.

The next morning, however, the papers were full of the story, and though no light was thrown upon the manner of Greaves' disappearance, certain facts of interest were mentioned. On the very day before his disappearance, it appears, he had executed a deed conveying the bulk of his large property to Sophie Baddely. This deed was not a will, but a deed of gift simply. Its provisions went into effect immediately, and, in view of what had occurred, one could not help suspecting that Greaves had prepared it as part of a predetermined scheme of action, whether of suicide or something else. And here there was a coincidence that drew my attention. The "indisposition" of Mlle. Saki corresponded very nearly with the disappearance of Greaves. She had not returned to

the theater since the evening of that occurrence, and it was now stated that her absence might be prolonged for a week. I knew from Guise, the most intimate friend that Greaves had, that the latter had been several times to see Saki dance, and that he had betrayed rather marked interest in her performance. Mr. Baddely had said that his intending son-in-law was capable of strange escapades; was it possible, then, that he and the too-fascinating Persian had eloped together,—he having first salved his conscience by bestowing his wealth upon the woman he was abandoning? Moreover, Tinling having made inquiries at the theater, brought news that there was now no prospect of Saki's returning at all; on the contrary, her agent had paid a heavy forfeit, and she had departed none knew whither. The sprained ankle was obviously a fiction. Of course, the manner in which Greaves had effected his exit was no less than ever a mystery. A conceivable motive had been suggested, that was all.

* * *

The establishment known as Six Cent Sam's extends clear through the narrow block in which it stands, and has an entrance in the street on the

other side, a fact not generally known. For the rear face of the eating house is a pawnship, kept, as the sign board indicates, by one Samuel Jonathan, who is, in fact, no other than Six Cent Sam himself; and to the initiated there is a passageway leading out of the pawnshop into the eating house I am of the initiated; and as I was passing down this passage on the day after the scene at the club, I met Sam,—or Mr. Jonathan,—and he said:

"Turn back, sir; I've something to say to you."

I followed him into the office of the pawnshop, where we sat down.

"One way or another," began Sam, "I hear a good deal of what's going on. Pawnshops and eating houses bring news. Now, there's young Greaves, for instance."

I became interested at once. Sam is always interesting.

"When last seen," continued the latter, "had on gray mackintosh and soft hat. Could you identify them? Look at these," and from a shelf he drew out just such an English-made garment as Guise had described to us, with the hat to match.

"He's been here, then?" I asked.

Sam shook his head, and went on in his terse, deep-toned way. "A fellow came here yesterday

with a carbuncle on his nose, and a game eye. Had these duds under his arm; wanted to sell 'em. How did he come by 'em? Gent had given 'em to him. How and why? Oh, quite a yarn. Gent met him on street doing sandwich act for Fifth Avenue Theatre. Pursuant to bargain then and there made, and instructions given, met him again next day, same place. Another gent along. Disturbance on street; other man's attention distracted; garments exchanged inside ten seconds. Gent, in sandwiches, marches down street after other sandwiches; no one ever thinks of looking at face of sandwich, only the announcement on board. Thus gent became invisible, and has so remained."

So this was the simple but ingenious solution of the puzzle.

"And where is Greaves now, and what did he do it for?" I asked.

Sam looked me straight in the face with his powerful eyes.

"Where's Saki?" he replied.

"So they're together after all?" said I, rather vain of my insight.

"Guess not; but they ought to be."

That was a queer thing to say, and I stared at Sam without answering.

"Newspapers say he gave a pot of money to Miss Baddely," resumed the latter. "Proud, independent girl, father poor. She will be beholden to nobody, not even Greaves. Wanted to support herself. Greaves objects; quarrel. Now, if Greaves were to make away with himself, after deeding property to her, she would naturally give up her scheme of earning her own living. Do you see how the cat is going to jump?"

"You think Greaves has committed suicide?"

Sam gave me a reproachful glance. "Wasn't I asking to bring him and Saki together? Do you know either of the ladies?"

"Either of them?"

"Well, do you know Saki?" said Sam, a trifle impatiently.

"No, I don't."

"Nor Miss Baddely?"

"I haven't that pleasure."

"I'll introduce you to both of them. We'll go now. Great friends; always together."

"Who? Miss Baddely and Saki?"

"The same."

"What are we to do there?"

"I want 'em to settle which of 'em's to marry Greaves."

"Is Greaves in love with both of them?"

"That's his fix, precisely."

"And they with him?"

"That's what I'm figuring on."

"And you expect them to agree which of them—"

"We have to hurry," remarked Sam, rising. "Let me get into a clean shirt, and we're off." He stepped into a side room as he spoke, and shut the door.

I did not know what to make of it, but I knew enough of Sam to know that he, who knew everything and everybody, from a pawn-shop *habitué* to a wealthy club man, was not acting in the dark. In a few minutes he reappeared, in the garb of a well-to-do man-about-town. Silk hat, prince albert coat, striped trousers, white scarf, yellow gloves, and silver-headed umbrella. Not a finer gentleman in the city.

"We'll look up Mlle. Saki first," he said, as we sallied forth together. "Do you speak Persian fluently? Never mind, she speaks as good English as you or I do, and is a very intelligent woman."

To us, awaiting her in a tasteful but simple sit-

ting room up-town, entered the famous Persian dancer. She was a handsome brunette, with superb black eyes and hair. Her figure and bearing were all grace and elegance. She was plainly dressed, and looked, as Sam had said, very intelligent.

"Now, Mademoiselle," said Sam, after the greetings were over, "I have called as your manager, to learn what you want to do. You may speak freely before this gentleman."

"Tell me first what has become of him?" she replied, in a slightly tremulous voice. "I can never forgive myself. Is he—"

"He is a pig-headed donkey, if you must have my opinion," returned Sam. "And he's as well as such a monster deserves to be. Now, shall we temporize with him, or shall we keep on our course and let him go to—" Sam's finger at this juncture was pointing downward.

"Temporize with him? I'll go down on my knees to him if he will but give me the

chance. He was right from the beginning, and I was wrong. I saw that almost from the first—long before this terrible thing happened. But for my miserable obstinacy, I'd have given it up then. I had no conception what the life was till I had tried it. It was an awful lesson. I shall never forget it. I feel as if I had actually done all the bad things every one seemed to suspect me of. And yet, when I was looking forward to it, it all appeared good and right. I thought I would elevate and ennoble my art. But the world is hard."

"Well, it is unless we take it the right way," said Sam. "The best way to find out is to make experiments. I helped you to do that, and you're the better for it, because you now know what you would never have believed if it had been told you. Some girls go through life believing all they are told, good or bad, but you're not that sort. You can do other things just as clever as dancing, and not so open to remarks. For one thing, you can make a man happy, and bring up his children."

Mlle. Saki blushed, and tears stood in her eyes.

"It's too late to think of that now," she said. "He must dispise me and hate me; he couldn't help it."

"Pooh! besides, there are other men in the world as good as he, and a great deal better."

"You know that is not so," exclaimed Mlle. Saki, with a naïve indignation that was enchanting. "I should like to see him again, though, just once," she added, "to tell him how sorry and ashamed I am, and to ask his forgiveness."

"I guess it would be more politic for you to forgive him," said Sam, with a smile. "However, we'll see what can be done," and thereupon we took our leave.

* * *

It was a mysterious affair altogether, and has never been cleared up to this day. As everybody knows, Greaves is married, but he married Miss Sophie Baddely. Mlle. Saki was never again heard of. It is the impression among the general public that she returned to Paris. Be that as it may, I saw Mrs. Greaves driving out in the park the other day with her husband, and remarked that the lady bore a striking resemblance to the Persian dancer. Guise and Tinling, however, have never spoken of any likeness. No doubt, she must have looked very different in her Persian costume from what she did in the plain American dress that she wore when I saw her.

RAXWORTHY'S TREASURE.

THIS story, as I now have reason to believe, began with an unconsidered interview between my friend Six Cent Sam and a meager elderly lady in a black gown. The interview took place in a compartment of the pawnshop annex. I was passing through the passage on my way to the eating room, and supposed that the elderly female of whom I caught a glimpse was negotiating an ordinary loan. In the light of some things that have occurred since, I am now inclined to think otherwise. In the eating room, I found Raxworthy lunching on bean soup and bread; and I sat down at the same table with him. To those who know Raxworthy, I need not say that I did not expect him to put my account on his check. For the information of other persons I will give some account of who Raxworthy was.

He was (and is) the son of an English artist, the descendant of a family of English gentlemen. The first emigrant to America was this Raxworthy's father. He came hither in his early manhood, and made money out of real estate which he had inadvertently bought. He died rich, and his son got all the property. There is in England, not far from London, a venerable town called Isleworth, and in the pages of its history those who will may read the history of old Jasper Raxworthy, "The Miser of Isleworth." Our man is not only the great-grandson of Jasper, but he inherits his idiosyncrasy. He is a miser, and quite as picturesque and irrational as him of tradition. He thus affords unfailing entertainment to his friends.

He is about thirty years old, thin, pale, tall, and with no hair to speak of. His hands are long, bloodless, and knotty at the finger-joints. In disposition he is exceedingly amiable, laughing readily in a thin, high cackle, while hundreds of fine wrinkles spring up around his eyes and mouth. His conversation is as amiable and also as thin as his laugh, and is largely devoted to accounts of things he has done which he thinks devilish clever, but which, to impartial minds, have more or less of the ludicrous.

For example: he was once engaged to marry a young woman, for no better reason, as I believe, than that he thought her an economical housekeeper. She was poor, and he bought her a gown to be married in—not a regular wedding dress, but a useful costume, that would be available for general purposes for years to come. At or about this juncture, the lady wrote to break off the engagement. Raxworthy accepted the mitten philosophically, but demanded of his lost love that she return the gown. She did return it, and he has kept it ever since, not as a memento of a buried romance, but as a convenient thing to have on hand in case he should want to make another attempt to enter the hymeneal state. Dollars to cents that if he ever does marry, his wife will be selected primarily on the basis of her fitness for the gown.

Raxworthy also inherits artistic tastes, and is a diligent collector of works of art and virtu of all kinds. The price he paid for each is affixed to it, and he discourses on the profit at which he could sell it again. But the most remarkable of his hoards is that which consists wholly of gold and jewels; gold coins of all ages, gold nuggets, gold ornaments of historic as well as intrinsic value,

pieces of gold plate—in short, gold in every shape. Then there are precious stones, in settings, separate, and in the rough, including many antiques, the whole making a pile big enough to fill a steel-bound strong box, two feet wide by eighteen inches long and one foot deep. This treasure must be worth a great many thousand dollars, and the anomaly is that it lies there in the strong-box, collecting no interest. Raxworthy, when attacked on this point, offers various excuses, but the fact is, he is a victim to the true miser's mania for gloating over treasure. It is heaven to him to sit over the box, and plunge both his hands into jingling piles of Spanish doubloons, Roman coins of the Empire, American double eagles, odds and ends of precious metals, diamonds, rubies and all the rest of it, and to feel those concrete symbols of wealth in his actual grasp. Usury has its charms; to dip fingers in the glittering heaps of solid lucre is a distinct and solid peculiar ecstacy, which your genuine, thoroughbred miser cannot deny himself. Auromania is as real a disease as dipsomania, and as inaccessible to reason. Moreover, Raxworthy's strong-box is a constant menace to his safety and peace of mind, for he insists on keeping it in his own house instead of in a safety vault. He must

have it ever ready at hand, as the toper his bottle. Nay, he must occasionally speak of it to other people, and even display it to them; and the fame of it has traveled further than he perhaps suspects.

Not long ago, for instance, he received a letter written on paper bearing the imprint of the correspondence department of the famous Green Vaults of Dresden, and signed by a gentleman as curator. In this communication, permission was asked to examine his treasure, with a view to the possible purchase of it. Raxworthy was very vain of this evidence of distinction, as he considered it, and when, in due course of time, the eminent curator and his private secretary arrived in New York, our friend spent several hours in showing them his collection. The curator, who, it appears, was a German of a morbid and ultra-cautious cast of mind, as befitted a gentleman entrusted with the custodianship of the Green Vaults, pointed out to Raxworthy the folly of permitting his treasure to remain exposed to the perils of theft and fire; but Raxworthy displayed arrangements in the way of locks, bars, spring guns, and electric alarms, and proved the fallacy of the timid foreigner's misgivings. A discussion then arose as to the cash value of the collection, and Raxworthy named a price

more than twice as high as he really believed the things to be worth. The curator, on the other hand, declared he was not authorized to offer more than an amount which appeared to Raxworthy ludicrously inadequate. They dickered over the matter like a couple of Pennsylvania Dutchmen over a horse trade, and after several days, they seemed not much nearer a settlement than at the start. I was inclined to think that the entire affair was of a somewhat Pickwickian complexion; that is to say, I doubted whether the party of the first part had any serious intention to purchase; and I was morally certain that had Raxworthy been conceded the whole amount of his first demand he would have found some pretext for wriggling out of the bargain. At all events the foreigners finally retired, with many courteous expressions of esteem, promising to confer with their superiors, and communicate the latter's ultimatum to Raxworthy. Nobody seriously imagined that anything more would ever be heard of the subject; though Raxworthy himself pretended that he anticipated receiving an autograph letter from the king of Saxony, offering him all the money he asked for, and the Cross of the Saxon Order of Merit into the bargain. In fact, Raxworthy, like

many other people of eccentric and solitary life, enjoyed living in a sort of fairyland of his own creation, and foisting upon himself the most fantastic delusions. And this, by the way, leads me to speak of an aspect of his character which sometimes led him into quaint predicaments.

Raxworthy was a confirmed Spiritualist. He did not say much about it, but those who knew him, knew that such was the fact. He consulted mediums and astrologers on business questions, and, what is more singular, he not seldom took their advice. Whether or not the advice always turned out well, I don't know, but he never said anything to the contrary. There is no accounting for such vagaries. They are constantly observed in men otherwise shrewd and hard-headed. It may be the result of an instinctive reaction against the despotism of the concrete and rational. I will now relate an instance of Raxworthy's spiritualistic experience, which is not only curious but rather romantic as well.

In the first place I must go back to Six Cent Sam's eating house, where, when this long digression began, I was on the point of sitting down at Raxworthy's table. We greeted each other cordially, and I ordered, as usual, a chop and a

pint of Beaune. Raxworthy, when he pays his own score, is frugal in his meals; but is not averse to conviviality at the expense of others. So I offered him a share of my bottle; and when, in a few minutes, Sam came along and yielded to my invitation to sit down with us, I ordered another pint. Under the genial influence of these proceedings, Raxworthy presently waxed loquacious.

"You recollect," he said, "those German fellows who came to treat with me about my collection? Well, I knew I had n't heard the last of them, and the other day I got a letter asking me to meet them in Philadelphia; they wanted to amend their offer. I locked up my house and went. When I got there, I found there had been some misunderstanding; they had waited for me all the day before and then gone off, leaving a letter with the clerk of their hotel to say that they had a further proposition from Dresden, which they would like to submit to me. They made another appointment to meet me this week here in New York."

"You are playing in big luck," said I.

"What do you know about these folks?" inquired Sam. "Are they straight? Can they do what they say they can?"

"You should have seen their letters of introduction; and I happen to know they have credit for a million."

"Humph! I don't know. Have you consulted our friends on the other side?"

Raxworthy gave him a quick glance. "You mean—"

"Spirits, of course. What else?" rejoined Sam, sipping his wine.

Raxworthy looked gratified. "You're a sensible fellow," he said. "You recognize that the affairs of this world are guided by supersensuous powers. I like to talk to a man who can rise above vulgar prejudice."

"If you mean a reflection on me," I hastened to say, "I am anxious not to be vulgar, when I get a chance."

He laughed good-naturedly. "Oh, there's no telling what you believe. However, I could tell you fellows something;"—he lowered his voice and bent forward—"there's a medium I know—her name is Mrs. Selkirk; she has sent me word that

there's a message awaiting me which will have a permanent influence on my fortune. I am to meet her this evening."

"I'd like to go with you," said Sam, much to my surprise.

"You would? Well, I don't know but it might be managed. It'll be in the nature of a test, you know. And you can come, too," he added, turning to me. "Of course, you know, her fee is two dollars each person. It's a good deal of money, but—"

"Never mind," said Sam, gravely, "we'll raise it —for that."

A shade of anxiety departed from Raxworthy's face. "All right, then," he responded, heartily. "At eight o'clock. It may be about those German fellows. I shouldn't be surprised."

It was not about them, however. I confess that the performance impressed me. Sam was silent and attentive, seeming to be familiar with such things. I wondered if there were anything which that man had not experienced. As for Mrs. Selkirk, she was a quiet, slender woman of middle age, with one of those average faces that one imagines one has seen before. She was a thoroughly respectable person. She wore black silk, with

white ruching, and white lace around her hair. It was a private seance—no one present but ourselves. After a few polite preliminaries, we went into executive session. The room was darkened, until, by my utmost stretch of vision, I could just see what I believed to be Mrs. Selkirk's white lace and ruching. Gradually a luminous appearance bloomed out, so to say, in the air above and behind her head.

"They are taking me to a house," murmured the medium. "It is a house in Vernon street," she presently added; and I declare, that, as she said these words, I saw, or fully believed I saw, the phantom of a house appear in the midst of the luminous place. It was a small, old brick house, the blinds closed and defaced, the wooden steps leading up to the door in a ruinous state, and an air of not having been inhabited for a long time hanging over the whole place.

"Who is in control?" asked Raxworthy, in a reverent voice.

There was no reply to this question. The apparition of the house slowly ceased to be visible, but something else seemed to be coming into existence in another part of the room. It was very faint at first, but after wavering back and forth for a

while, now in this world and now in the other, it became more distinct; it was the figure of somebody—of a man. His face was in a sort of shadow, or perhaps it was not so fully materialized as the other parts. He inclined his body stiffly, and said in a quavering voice:

"Evenin', folks; I'm Gaffer Peters."

I began to feel uneasy at this miracle, and turned for support to Sam, who, however, was invisible in the darkness.

"Glad to see you, Gaffer," said Raxworthy, encouragingly, for the poor old gentleman seemed on the point of fading out again. "Have you any message for any of us?"

"Look under the hearthstone," was the barely audible reply. "The hearthstone in the back sitting room. It worries me—it worries me. I buried it there—" The voice died away.

"You buried it—yes, Gaffer. What was it that you buried?" said Raxworthy, in a tone of repressed eagerness.

"Gold and jewels—gold and jewels—a treasure—vast treasure," came the halting reply. "I can't rest—gold and jewels—buried—hearthstone—" The voice seemed constantly on the verge of disappearing into silence entirely.

"In what place are they buried?" inquired Raxworthy, pronouncing the words with anxious distinctness, as if to make up for the vocal deficiencies of the venerable spectre.

There was a considerable pause, and to our consternation, the figure of our interlocuter grew dimmer and finally was altogether absorbed into the darkness. But out of that darkness the answer sounded, and it was more clearly audible than any of the previous utterances, as if the Gaffer's lungs had gained all the materializing power that the rest of the spirit had lost.

"No. 97 Vernon street. I give it all to you. Go quickly. It may be too late."

The medium stirred restlessly.

"I guess that's all we'll get this evening," remarked Sam, at last, and he stepped to the gas jet and turned on the light.

Mrs. Selkirk passed her hands over her eyes, and smiled politely upon us.

"Was the seance successful? Were you satisfied, gentlemen?" she asked, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"Quite so, madam," replied Sam in his deep voice. "It looks as if our friend Raxworthy would be indebted to you in a much greater sum than two dollars."

"Oh, I can't admit that," exclaimed Raxworthy hastily. "We may have been deceived, you know; besides—"

"If gentlemen meet with good fortune in consequence of my seances, they are not expected to pay anything extra," said Mrs. Selkirk, quietly; "and on the other hand, I am not to be held responsible in case of any disappointment. Those are the rules." So saying she arose, as if to intimate that the seance was at a close. We made our adieux, and departed.

"Honestly, now, what do you think of that?" demanded Raxworthy, triumphantly, as he faced us on the sidewalk.

"Honestly, I want a drop of whisky," said I.

Sam tipped his hat on the back of his head, and thrust his hands in his pockets.

"As a practical man, I say we put this thing to the test at once," said he. "Vernon street's near here; let's go and find out what No. 97 looks like."

We went. Vernon street turned out to be a small and obscure place, westward from Jefferson Market. It was dirty and ill-lighted, and given up to a vile class of the population. But I had a "turn" when I beheld, nearly at the extremity of it, the very identical building of which we had seen

the apparition at the seance. There it was, a rickety two-story brick building, with blinds rotting off their hinges, and a flight of tumbledown wooden steps leading to the front door.

We all three stared up at it in awed silence.

"Well, Mr. Raxworthy," said Sam, at last, "that seems to be your house, all right enough. What do you intend to do next?"

"Why, let's get in, and find out whether the back sitting room—"

"I don't approve of house-breaking," interrupted Sam, decisively. "Besides, even if we found the treasure, it would belong to the landlord and not to us. That's law, I believe."

"What do you advise, then?" Raxworthy asked.

"Become the landlord yourself."

"You don't mean buy the house?" cried Raxworthy, recoiling.

Sam nodded grimly. "That's just what I do mean, sir," was his answer.

"Wouldn't it do to rent it?" asked Raxworthy, with a gleam of hope.

"Renting wouldn't entitle you to the treasure."

"But suppose there shouldn't be any treasure,"

said Raxworthy, wiping the perspiration from his forehead.

"Well, there's where your test comes in. It's to take or to leave. The spirits were right about the house, anyway."

"Yes," assented Raxworthy, in sore distress. "But I don't really know where I am to find the money to—"

"I'll make you this proposition," said Sam, emphatically, as he bit the end off a cigar; "I'll go shares with you on the house or I'll buy it all myself—treasure included; is that fair?"

"Oh, as to that, I suppose—I'm obliged to you, of course. Still, I might manage somehow to raise the money, if— Do you suppose I could get it for a hundred dollars?" faltered the wretched Raxworthy.

"Get that house for a hundred dollars?" repeated Sam, with boundless scorn. "You'd be luckier than I expect you will if it goes to you for a hundred times a hundred."

"Ten thousand dollars? Oh, that's impossible," cried the tortured victim.

"And there might be nothing in it after all," assented Sam. "All right; then I take the whole outfit. I happen to have ten thousand that I'd

about as lief put in there as anywhere. Well, if you're not going my way, I'll bid you good-night, gentlemen."

"Hold up a minute," groaned Raxworthy. "I could get it on two-thirds mortgage, could n't I?"

"You might, or you might not; probably not," said Sam, coldly.

"Well, I'll inquire; I'll think it over, and decide in a few days," Raxworthy rejoined.

"I'm decided now," said Sam. "I shall buy that house, mortgage or no mortgage, the first thing to-morrow morning. If the treasure turns out to be there, well and good. If not, why, real estate is going up in this neighborhood, and I guess I can get my money back, anyway."

"I never thought of that," cried Raxworthy, eagerly. "Of course I could sell it again; in fact, I would do that, in any case, after the question of the treasure had been decided. Or, better yet, I can rent it in the first instance, and then, if the treasure turns out to be

there, I can buy the place outright, and so legalize my possession of the treasure. Oh, that's the grandest scheme of all."

A momentary smile flitted over the iron visage of Sam.

"Well, I've told you my ultimatum," said he. "If the house isn't yours to-morrow, it will be mine. And now, gentlemen, this is no place for respectable citizens to be at midnight. If you'd like to come and have a quiet chat over a bottle of my Burgundy, come on; it won't cost you anything. We're close by."

To make a long story short, Raxworthy became the owner of No. 97 Vernon street, on comparatively easy terms. On that momentous afternoon, Sam and I accompanied him to the premises. With as much precaution and mystery as if we were going to inter a murdered corpse instead of unearth a possible bag of treasure, we took with us, carefully wrapped up in canvas, a spade and a pick. We effected an entrance into the house without attracting undue attention from passers-by, and found it to be very dark and very dirty within. Sam, however, had had the forethought to bring in his pocket a bit of candle, having

lighted which, we proceeded to the fateful back sitting room.

At this stage of the adventure, Raxworthy's agitation became painfully manifest. I was not a little excited myself. Sam was circumspect but composed. As he stooped over the hearthstone, I fancied I discerned symptoms of the butt of a revolver in the hip pocket of his trousers. So far, everything—house, street, number, room, and hearthstone, had fulfilled the ghost's word, which we were almost ready to take, as did Hamlet, for a thousand pounds. We gathered about the hearthstone, and glowered down upon it. Would the ray of our flickering taper, as we turned back the heavy slab from its resting-place, sparkle upon a vast heap of splendid jewels and gold? If so, what was one to think about Spiritualism? No test could be more convincing.

"Take the pick, and go at it," said Sam, in vigorous, practical tones. "Let's have the agony over, one way or the other."

Raxworthy, thus appealed to, laid hands upon the tool in question, but was unable to make any play with it. He was in such a nervous tremor that his muscles (if he had any) were not under his control.

"Pshaw! Give *me* the daggers," cried Sam. "Stand by to help with the spade when I get the slab started. In she goes—now, then, up she comes. Lay it on one side, there. Well, what have we got?"

What, indeed? We all went down on our hands and knees, and peered into the cavity revealed by the uplifted stone. No flash of radiant jewels greeted our eyes. The hole seemed to contain nothing but dirt and rubbish. Raxworthy, with a sort of desperation, finally reached in, and clawed out some folds of old oilcloth. This seemed to be all the booty in sight. He uttered a groan that was like a sob.

"Ten thousand dollars for a scrap of oilcloth!"

He rose from his knees with the feeble movement of an aged man, and was about to totter away when Sam arrested his departure.

"Not so fast, young fellow," said he. "You're no hand at treasure hunting. We're not at the bottom of this thing yet. Here, what do you call this?"

He had laid hold of a knot or tuft of something that projected from the bottom of the hole. He gave a stout tug at it, but it resisted the effort.

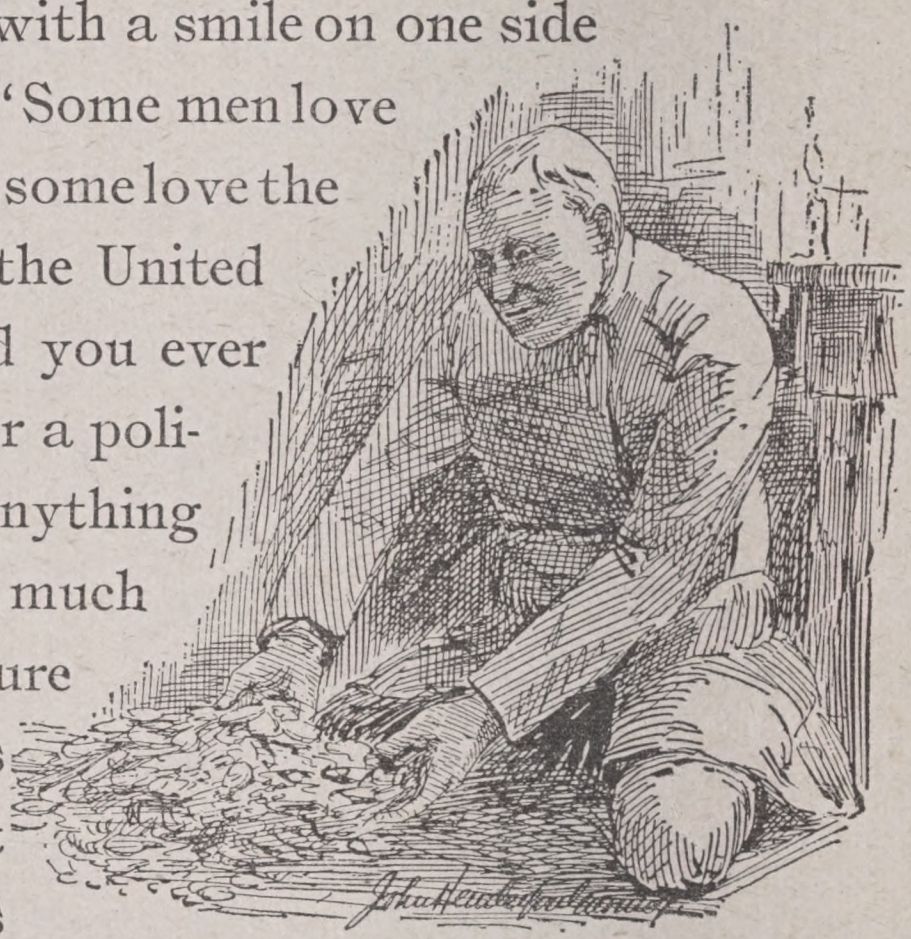
"Bear a hand here, some of you," cried he. "Am I the only man among you who has any faith?"

Hereupon, we all got our hands upon that projecting tuft, and heaved amain, Raxworthy, especially, putting a fury of strength into his lift. And, lo, up came, slowly but surely, a huge, heavy bag of coarse sacking, weighing as much as the three of us could well handle. As we dropped it on the floor beside the hole, there proceeded from it an unmistakable chinking sound, as of metal. At that sound Raxworthy's face became ghastly pale, and he panted as if he had just run a race. Sam ripped open the mouth of the bag, then seized it by the bottom and, with a great jerk, emptied the whole contents out on the floor.

It was true, after all. The apparition had not lied. Spiritualism was vindicated. Before us lay a vast pile of gold and precious stones, to the value of Heaven knows how many hundred thousand dollars. Raxworthy had become a millionaire in a moment. He emitted a wild screech, and threw himself face downward into the midst of the treasure.

"Mine—mine—all mine!" he gurgled out, as he wallowed at our feet, oblivious and careless of us and all the world.

"It's a queer sight, isn't it?" remarked Sam, turning to me with a smile on one side of his mouth. "Some men love a woman, and some love the presidency of the United States; but did you ever know a lover or a politician to love anything or anybody as much as that creature there loves dirt? Look at him, sir; it's worth looking at; there's nothing else just like it on the face of this earth."



As this was the only moralizing speech I ever happened to hear Sam make, I transcribe the whole of it.

It was some time before our friend became enough of a human being again to allow of being reasoned with. But in the course of half an hour or so we got him on his legs and the treasure back into the bag. I am free to admit that the events of the afternoon had somewhat agitated even me, though my share in the treasure was that of an observer only; and I retain no very clear

recollection of what occurred immediately after this. I seem to remember that we somehow got the bag to the door, and that somehow a hack happened to be standing there, and that as we got into it, I noticed Sam speak to a couple of policemen who happened to be on the spot. Then he got in, and slammed the door of the vehicle and off we trundled.

In fifteen minutes we were at Raxworthy's rooms, with the bag. He threw off his coat, and wiped his forehead.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, fellows," said he. "I'll get out my strong box, and we'll count the treasure into it, and if it turns out to be as good as it looks, I'll make Mrs. Selkirk a present of five dollars."

"Steady, my man," said Sam; "don't be rash."

"Well, that's the way I feel," he replied. "I'm reckless. I'll give her two dollars, anyhow."

"Better cool off a bit, before you commit yourself," returned the other.

"You two must help me with the box," he went on; "it's as heavy as the bag."

We followed him to the fireplace in his bedroom. He pushed aside a panel in the wall, disclosing an iron door, secured by a couple of steel bars and an

immense lock. He took out a key, and applied it to the keyhole. It would not turn.

"Anything wrong?" Sam inquired.

Raxworthy made another effort; it was as futile as the first. He turned upon us with a ghastly look.

"It's been tampered with," he said, in a husky whisper.

"Stuff! Give her another turn," rejoined Sam.

Raxworthy made a gesture eloquent of terror and despair.

"Oh, what does it mean?" he quavered. "My soul, what is it?"

Sam stooped down and examined the lock. "It looks to me like flat burglary," he remarked, coolly. "And a mighty neat job, too."

A paroxysm seized Raxworthy. He sprang up and gave the knob of the iron door a violent wrench. The door flew open, and Raxworthy sat down on the floor hard.

"Keys unnecessary," remarked Sam, still with the same impassivity. He took hold of the box and pulled it out of the cavity in which it stood with a single jerk of his powerful arm. It came to the floor with a hollow sound that affected Raxworthy as might the Crack of Doom a con-

demned soul. Neither words or outcries could any longer express his feelings. He sat huddled up on the floor, staring at the chest, voiceless and almost lifeless while convulsive shudderings ever and anon passed through his lean body.

"A clean job," repeated Sam, throwing open the lid, and glancing within. "They did leave you the box, though, and, if you've lost one treasure, you've got another to put in the place of it. Just pour into the box what is in the bag, and say no more about it."

"Ruined! All my gold," moaned Raxworthy, with a sob.

"You make me very weary," said Sam. He took hold of the bag and once more emptied its contents on the floor. "Ruined, eh?" he added; "I wish I was ruined to the same tune."

My stars, what a gorgeous heap of wealth it was. Doubloons, moidores, eagles, nuggets, diamonds, rubies, and all the rest of it.

"It's just as good as your own pile over again," said Sam, "neither more nor less."

"They're not worth the tenth of mine," said Raxworthy, tragically. But the rattle and sparkle of the jewels had aroused him in spite of himself. He picked up one of the doubloons, then

another; then he examined a nugget. A sudden flush sprang into his face; with trembling hands he snatched up a diamond ring of peculiar design.

"What ails the fellow now?" muttered Sam, while that odd half smile again twitched the corner of his mouth.

Raxworthy, meanwhile, continued to catch up one jewel or coin after another, and stare at them like one demented.

"Why, what's this? and this? and this?" he cried, again and again. "They're mine, I tell you —mine—all mine! These are what they robbed me of. Am I crazy? My own treasure—how can it be?" He broke into frantic convulsions of laughter, in the midst of which he kept gathering up double handfuls of the precious stuff, and burying his face in it; I believe he was actually kissing it.

"What he found, he's lost, and what he's lost, he's found," Sam observed, philosophically. "That's apt to be the way in this world."

There was a knock at the door. Sam opened it. There stood a policeman. He saluted Sam deferentially.

"Well?" said the latter.

"We've got the birds," said the officer. "They turned up not ten minutes after you left."

"A close shave, all round," Sam remarked. "We'll be round to identify 'em in an hour. That's all."

He closed the door again, and contemplated Raxworthy, still caressing his treasure, with contemptuous amusement.

"It's a pity to disturb him, isn't it?" he said. "He's twice as happy as if he'd never been robbed at all. But business is business. Come on, Mr. Raxworthy. I'll have to take you to police headquarters for a few minutes, and then you will have your evening to devote to your—wife."

* * *

Now, what was the meaning of all this? It was a perplexing case. The two burglars turned out to be identical with the distinguished curator of the Green Vaults of Dresden, and his secretary; and the police also professed to remember in them two well-known and skillful offenders against our present laws regarding property. One of the chief witnesses against them was the original proprietor of the premises at No. 97 Vernon street, who, also, strange to relate, was indistinguishable from

that excellent medium and lady, Mrs. Selkirk. I have suspected, since these events, that Mrs. Selkirk and Sam were old acquaintances; and it may be worth mentioning that I once saw, in Sam's back office, an antique bell-crowned hat, which reminded me strongly of the one worn by that amiable and distressed spectre, the late Gaffer Peters.

But is it not singular that the robbers should have concealed their booty in the very spot, of all others, in which Gaffer Peters had directed Raxworthy to dig for his own hoard? The ways of Providence, not to speak of the artfulness of the police, are sometimes past finding out. As a test of the trustworthiness of Spiritualism, the adventure is perhaps less satisfactory than it seemed to be at first. But it is at all events certain that Sam, later on, took No. 97 off Raxworthy's hands, and has since turned it into a retreat for helpless and decayed newsboys.

THE JOHN NORTH MYSTERY.

THREE days before the recent election I was dining at Judge Hornbuckle's, on West Fifty-Third street, and was accorded the privilege of sitting beside Miss Ann Carew. I have known this young lady a good many years, but of late we have met but seldom. She has been abroad and in society, she is rich and a beauty, and the world is large; at all events our paths diverged. But there remained on each side a cordial sentiment, and whenever we did meet it was with pleasure. She was, at the time of which I am now writing, just past her twenty-first year, and in no respect a common girl. She has a mind as well as a body, and both are adorable.

The judge, with his manners of a gentleman of the old school, had been giving some attention to the political situation. Since the close of Grant's second term he had not personally entered the political arena. He has a clean record, and no man in the state is more respected. "It is the fashion," he was saying, from the chair which he so dignifiedly filled at the head of the table, "to assert that politics are becoming totally corrupt. I am disposed to challenge that assertion. In view of the fact that the persons in charge of our state and municipal affairs are frequently of humble origin and limited education, that they are placed in positions of great responsibility, that they are subjected to strong temptations, and must often act under powerful excitement,—taking these circumstances into consideration I am more inclined to admire their general well-doing than to cavil at—h'm—their occasional lapses."

"How long since you got back?" I asked Ann Carew.

"From Europe? Only a few days ago. This is the first time I've seen anybody since. I almost wish I'd stayed till these elections were over. It's like being in a house where somebody is ill. Unless you're either a doctor or a patient, it's tiresome."

"Not personally," said the judge, replying to someone. "I happen, however, to have some information concerning him. He affords a favorable example of the truth of the contention I was just making—that sterling integrity is the strongest recommendation to popular favor in this country. Once convince the people that the character of a candidate is beyond question, and they will support him with enthusiasm. Now, the gentleman you have mentioned has, in a period comparatively brief, accomplished a remarkable and in all respects a creditable career. Six months ago he was practically unknown, except, of course, as to his services during the concluding years of the war, when, though a very young man, he distinguished himself for bravery and capacity. But since that period he has entirely disappeared from public view. I believe I am correct in stating that he is almost a stranger even in society, though well-qualified to become a favorite there. A bachelor, a student, a recluse,—such has been his category. Last spring not half a dozen persons in this city enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance; to-day he is—and deservedly—perhaps the most conspicuous figure among the candidates before the peo-

ple. I venture the prophesy that he will secure the election."

"Who is this demigod?" I inquired of my companion.

She shook her head and smiled. "I didn't catch his name. I am more interested to know the name of the gentleman on the other side of the table. He has one of the finest heads and strongest faces I ever saw. And what eyes— they look right through you. Do you know him?"

"I know him, and I don't. He is a mystery. If I were told that he were the autocrat of this city, I should believe it. And yet he permits me to call him Sam. He is all things to all men. If you'll permit it, I'll introduce him to you after dinner."

"Thank you. Dear me, we are not done with the demigod yet."

"It was quite by an accident," the judge was saying. "He had made an invention for coupling and uncoupling cars automatically, and he had taken out a patent for the invention. In endeavoring to introduce it, however, he found himself hampered by a secret and invisible opposition. It was the old story of a vast monopoly retarding the march of progress for selfish pecuniary ends. But this man knew the value of his invention and

would accept neither compromise nor defeat. He declared war, and entered into a contest apparently hopeless with a spirit and determination nothing less than heroic. As time went on, he was naturally led to investigate the whole subject of railway rings and monopolies; his spirit infected others, and the sphere of the conflict enlarged. At length he found himself at the head of a resolute and well equipped body of men, sworn to expose and shatter the iniquity which had so long maintained itself in defiance of the public will and weal. Such a struggle could not fail to attract wide attention. Before it was over our friend was a marked man. The qualities he had shown could not be spared from political life. He was nominated for reform, and there is no doubt that he will receive an overwhelming popular vote, and, as I believe, will run far ahead of his ticket. It is noteworthy that many even of those who ordinarily might have been expected to oppose him appear among his supporters in this canvass."

"Is not that rather an ambiguous compliment, judge?" asked one of his hearers. "I know it has puzzled more than one of his friends." It was the

personage whom I had referred to under the name of Sam who put the query.

"I am sure that you, at any rate, have not misinterpreted it," retorted the judge, courteously.

"I know John North," said the other. "He's honest, and I believe he has too much sense to be used as a cat's-paw. But the support of the men you refer to is a queer phenomenon."

"Possibly they are capable of better things than you suppose," said a dark browed, smooth faced gentleman, affably.

"Possibly, Mr. Ryan," said Sam, glancing at the speaker.

"Did he say John North?" murmured Ann Carew. She spoke in such a faint voice that I turned in surprise, and found her quite pale.

"The name is a common one," I remarked.

"Very common," assented she, the color returning to her face. After a moment she addressed the judge: "What sort of a looking man is this Mr. North?"

"I could hardly describe him to you, Miss Carew. As I said, I have not the pleasure of his personal acquaintance, and—"

"He's a trifle over forty, well set up, dark beard, wears spectacles," put in Sam, with a polite incli-

nation of the head to the young lady. "Nothing extraordinary to look at. There might be a dozen men in New York who resemble him more or less."

"Not an unusual type, by any means," echoed Mr. Ryan. "It's his mental qualities that distinguish him. A very eloquent speaker, also."

"And that's another puzzling thing," said Sam. "A month ago John North could hardly string a dozen sentences together. Now, he's as fluent as a Frenchman. I haven't had an opportunity to ask him how he manages it. He has become rather difficult of access. But it's an odd development of the power of politics."

"Not so very rare, I think," slid in Mr. Ryan, softly. "I could recall other instances. It is the occasion, you know, that often draws out the man."

"I think it would be fun to attend a political meeting," said Ann Carew to me, confidentially. "It is an experience I've never had. Are there to be any good ones this week?"

"There is to be one to-morrow evening, and John North is due to speak at it. Let us make a little party, and go—my friend Sam, your aunt, and I. Will you do it?"

She looked at me with eyes that lightened by turns. For some reason, she had become excited and nervous during the last few minutes.

"I like your friend," she said, at length; "I think I shall like him. But I must talk a little with him first. Bring him to me after dinner. I have a curiosity to see a political meeting," she repeated.

She was going to say something more, but Mrs. Hornbuckle gathered eyes just then, and the ladies rose. When we followed them, I presented Sam, and left him and Ann Carew in earnest conversation. At the end of the evening, she beckoned me aside to say:

"I have decided to go. We have made the arrangements. My aunt and I will be ready when you call for us to-morrow."

Sam and I left the house together. "That fellow Ryan," he said, "is one of the reasons why I can't make out John North. Ryan is in with one of the worst political rings in the city. North can't be ignorant of it, and yet the two are close friends. Then again, North has taken to evading me and some other men who helped to put him where he is. This isn't a question of political gratitude, though; I don't want anything from anybody, and if I did I could get it without having to wait long, I guess.

But North, as the judge said, is not the man to let his friends feel snubbed. There's a screw loose, somewhere; I don't know where, but I mean to find out."

"I have no doubt you'll succeed."

"Miss Ann Carew is a nice young lady," remarked Sam, as we walked along. "Did she ever know him?"

"North? Not that I'm aware."

"There's no telling about women. I go this way. See you to-morrow. Good-night."

* * *

The hall was crowded, but Sam secured good seats for our little party near the stage on which the orators of the evening were to hold forth. Ann Carew's aunt sat between Sam and myself; Ann herself was on my right. She was animated, but did not talk much. She kept her eyes busy.

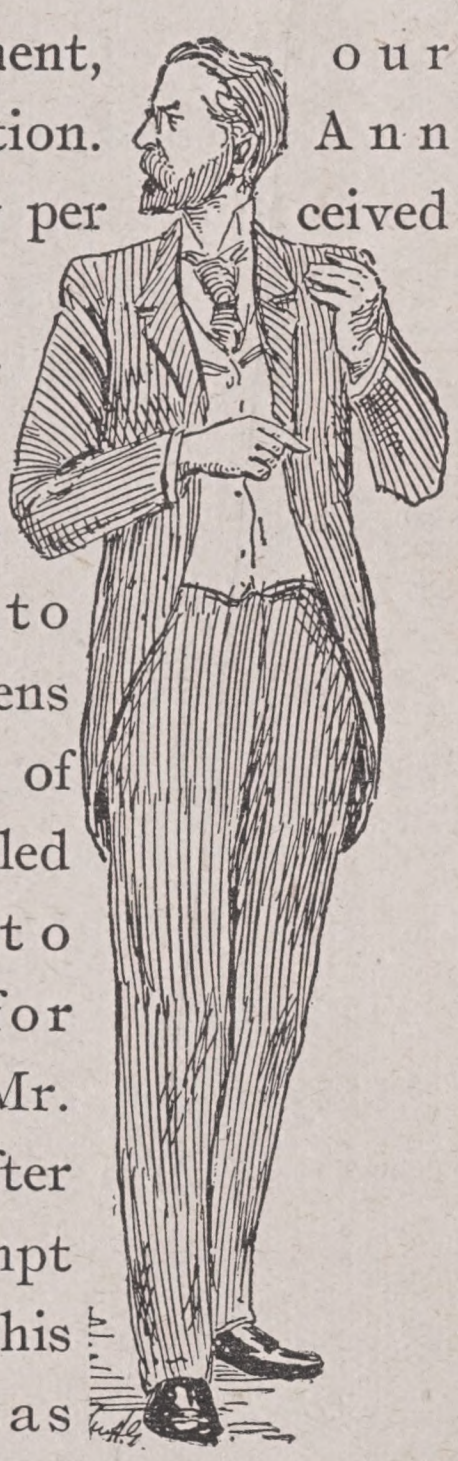
"Do you see John North," she asked me.

As I did not know the man by sight, I passed the question to Sam, who shook his head. The speaking began. It was of the familiar campaign order, and was received with the familiar campaign enthusiasm. The atmosphere of the hall was bad, and I began to feel bored. By and by there was a

stir at the rear of the stage, and the chairman, rising, announced Mr. John North.

The person thus designated made his way through the group, and stepped into the vacant space on the chairman's right. Cheers were called for, and given with heartiness. John North bowed, and adjusted his spectacles. He stood in a graceful position, one hand behind him, and the other ready for gesture at his side. In his demeanor there was certainly nothing of the greenhorn. He seemed a man accustomed to face crowds. When silence was restored he began to speak quietly, but, from the very first, with effect. He was a trained orator—a trained orator, rather than a natural one. Whence did he get his training? From a few weeks' experience of stump-speaking? Who ever heard of such a thing? Yet here was the fact before our eyes. I became so much interested in his speech that I forgot all about Ann Carew. I was recalled by an odd incident. John North was in the midst of one of his most impressive periods, and the audience was quite silent, when all at once a laugh rang out. I could scarcely credit my ears, but it was the laugh of Ann Carew.

I stared at her in consternation. Nor was I the only one who stared. In a moment, our party was the center of observation. Ann continued to laugh, but I now perceived that her laugh was somewhat hysterical. As she was a young lady of absolutely correct behavior, this was unaccountable. The audience began to murmur, and citizens in various parts of the hall appealed indignantly to the chair for order. Mr. North, after an attempt to continue his remarks, was forced to pause. Mr. Ryan, whom I had not observed before, rose from a seat near us and said:



"A young lady seems to have been taken ill; if the audience will exercise forbearance, her friends will no doubt assist her to leave." Here-

upon, to my additional dismay, and despite the convulsive efforts of her aunt to restrain her, Ann Carew stood up in her place, and lifted her right hand to claim attention, as she might have done at school when a child.

"I am not ill," she said, in a clear voice, "but I should like to ask the gentleman who had the floor a question. Will he allow me?"

The audience was now still once more. The people on the stage exchanged whispers. A voice from the gallery called out:

"Sure, if 't was me, I'd not stay to be axed; I'd be after doin' the axin' myself."

The audience chuckled at the characteristic gallantry of the honest Hibernian, and then listened for what Ann might have to say.

"I merely wish to ask the gentleman on the stage," continued Ann, "whether he knows who I am?"

The orator smiled in a sickly manner, and seemed to be rattled.

"I meet a good many people," he said, "and I have very possibly seen you before, Miss; but I can't say I recall your face at this moment."

"No, you do not know me," broke in Ann, her voice now rising high with excitement; "but I

know John North, and I say to everyone in this hall that you are not—"

The rest of the sentence was inaudible, for it was drowned in a stentorian shout of "order!" from Sam, followed by general uproar, and vigorous hammering with the chairman's gavel. Sam bent across and whispered to me:

"We must get her out of this at once, or there'll be trouble."

Our seats being on the aisle, we had little difficulty in escaping, and we were all four of us soon in our carriage, with Ann sobbing in her corner, but saying nothing; while her aunt was too much scandalized for coherent speech. As Sam and I were awaiting further developments before committing ourselves, the drive home was a silent one. We reached the house and marched in single file into the drawing room.

"Now, Miss Carew," said Sam, with composed cheerfulness, "just you sit down and tell us all about it. You've got the key to this puzzle, and you must open the lock. I have suspected all along there was something crooked going on, and I'm sure of it now; but I don't know what it is, and you do; so out with it, and don't be afraid but what we can make it right again."

"Ann, you have behaved disgracefully, and I think the kindest thing these gentlemen can do is to forget all about it. I'm sure I was never so scandalized and frightened in my life," declared the poor aunt, agitatedly.

"This is a serious matter, madam, and must be sifted to the bottom," said Sam, turning to the old lady, with a grave face. "Miss Carew had good cause to do as she did, and not only we, but the public of this city will, I expect, have reason to be grateful to her. So now, my dear," he added, to the girl, "what is it wrong about this John North we saw to-night?"

Ann sat erect, and lifted her tear-stained face.

"John North!" she cried; "that creature John North? He is an impostor! The moment I heard his voice I knew he was not John North."

"Why, Ann, what do you know of any John North?" exclaimed the aunt; "I'm sure I never heard of him till yesterday."

"I know John North; I met him two years ago; we were engaged; but then we quarreled, and I have not seen him since."

At this information, the aunt collapsed upon the sofa, and Sam said cheerfully:

"Come, that's straight and to the point. You are certain that this man is not your John North, and that your John is the same one the judge was talking of last night?"

"A girl knows the man she loves—has loved," said Ann, the color rushing to her face.

"But this fellow looks something like him?"

"Oh, I suppose he does—something; but not enough to deceive anybody with eyes," she replied, impatiently. "And then his voice—ah—"

She stopped, evidently in deep emotion.

"Still this may not be an imposter," said I to Sam, aside. "There may be two John Norths, both genuine; and as to their personal resemblance that is by no means so uncommon a thing as most people think."

Sam shook his head. "I have been puzzled all along by a change in the man; he has not looked or acted quite the same since the day or two following his first appearance on the rostrum. Then again, if he is an impostor, it will explain one problem that has troubled me all along."

"A problem?"

"The way in which the 'ring' people suddenly turned and supported him."

"How is that?"

"My dear sir," said Sam, with some severity, "John North is a genuine reformer, not one for revenue only, and therefore he is the mortal enemy of the men who are posing in that hall as his friends and supporters. The judge is an old innocent, and is honestly humbugged; but I suppose you and I know better. These rascals have run across a man whom anyone but the girl who loves him would mistake for the real John, but who is in fact a creature of their own, secretly pledged to support them in all their iniquities, and a clever orator to boot. Well, they put the real man out of the way, and stick this fellow in his place. Do you begin to see which way the cat jumps now?"

"Put him out of the way?"

"In one fashion or another. I mean to find out how. There are desperate men among them, and John North has shown that he is a hard man to subdue. If they could n't head him off in any other way, they have made another Cronin case out of him. This is the nineteenth century, I know, and we are a highly civilized people; but such things do happen."

"It seems too bold; the risk is too great; I can hardly believe it."

"The audacity makes it safe. The public is never

inclined to believe the worst. Besides, John North is known personally to very few persons. This girl may be the only human being who can certainly identify him. If the man still lives she will be the means of saving his life. By the way, Miss Carew," he added, turning to her, "did North ever speak to you about any invention that he was interested in?"

"He invented a car-coupling; it was when the judge spoke of that last night that I knew it must be my John North."

"Well, that settles it," said Sam, nodding his head and getting up. "There can't be two John Norths, both of whom invented car-couplings. Miss Carew, you have made the most important political stroke of this campaign. I shall be back here in two hours. If I bring back the genuine John North to you, will you kiss and make up with him?"

"I will—kiss you," said Ann, with a sparkle in her eyes and a flame in her cheeks.

"I'll earn that kiss, or know the reason why," returned Sam, with a deep respect in his voice that made me love him. "Come along," he added to me. "I'll show you some of the inside of New York politics."

We went to the east side, and stopped before a modest brown-stone house in the midst of a block. At the foot of the steps Sam turned to me and said:

"Have you got a gun?"

"Of course I haven't. Do you expect—"

"Well, I have two, and you may as well take one. We may run across a gorilla, or a—tiger, you know. Put it in your pocket, and say no more about it unless I give the word. Now, then!"

He rang the bell, and the door was opened by a stout, low-browed fellow, in a black cardigan jacket.

"Ah, Tom," said Sam, shouldering in past him, followed by myself, who was feeling anything but comfortable. "Tell the Boss I must see him right away."

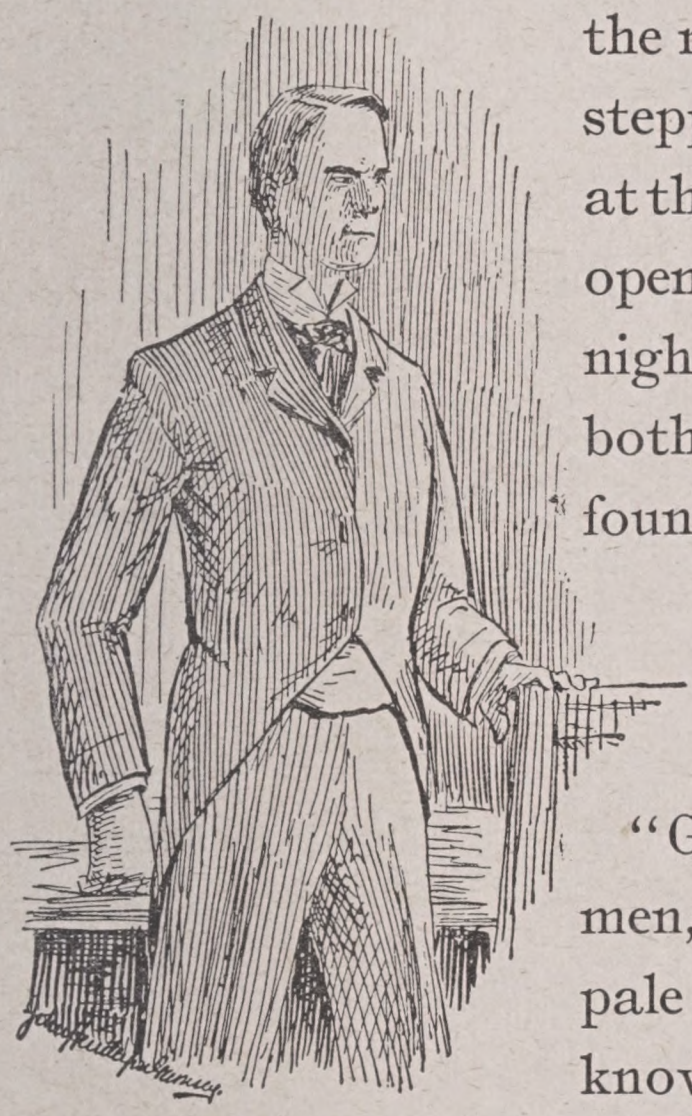
"De Boss ain't at home," began the fellow; but Sam cut him short.

"If he isn't at home, it'll be as much as your place is worth—or his either, for that matter. This is biz, my lad—see? That'll do; you go back downstairs, and we'll find our way. Now, captain."

Encouraged by this title, I followed my conductor upstairs and into a small room in the rear,

fitted up as a library. A man who had been seated at a table stood up and faced us. It was Mr. Ryan.

"Evening, old man," said Sam, curtly, taking in the room at a glance and stepping in front of a door at the rear, which was partly open. "Nice meeting to-night, wasn't it? Hate to bother you, but this confounded election hurries things up so! It is that North affair, you know."



"Glad to see you, gentlemen," said Ryan, with a pale grin. "I really don't know—"

"I was sure of that. But we must go through the forms, you know. Here's the warrant for your arrest—the bail won't be over twenty thousand. Put on your coat, and we'll step round to the office and get the thing fixed up and be back here in time for breakfast. How's that?"

"A warrant for my arrest? On what charge? Are you aware—"

'Oh, I say! It was a mighty smart move, but we've been onto you from the start. I was for settling it quietly, as between friends; but I'm afraid it's too late now. We gave you the straight tip more than once, but you wouldn't take it. You can't expect to kidnap a man like that, and have nobody squeal. Do you chaps want the earth? Maybe you'll get it; but John North is another thing."

As he uttered the last word Sam made a movement as quick as lightning, and Ryan was covered by his revolver. The hand of the latter had been creeping toward a drawer in the table. He withdrew it with a start, and sank into his chair. Sam reached over, felt in the drawer, and possessed himself of the other's weapon.

"It's a good make," he remarked, examining it critically, and ejecting the cartridges. "I like my own better, though. Well, let us get down to business. No funny work. What do you propose? There's more things hanging over your head, Mike Ryan, than there are hams on the ceiling of a corner grocery. If anything drops, there won't be enough of you left to pick up. That's all."

Ryan was silent for a minute or two. Then he looked up and said politely:

"What can I do for you, gentlemen? Anything in my power I shall be happy to—"

"It's just this, Mike; we have urgent business with Mr. North—not the orator, you know, but the one you persuaded to go into temporary retirement. If you can produce him within a reasonable time—say three minutes—I might contrive to mislay this warrant, and then— How does that strike you?"

"That will be all, will it? You see, I'm in an accommodating mood."

"That's all; except that our oratorical friend must work some other claim—the further from here the better for him."

"Of course you understand my position," said Ryan, recovering his smoothness of manner. "What was done was for the best interests of Mr. North—almost, I might say, at his instance. He has had no practice in public speaking, and his health made it unsafe for him to undertake a campaign at this inclement season. We wanted him to reserve his strength for the work of the office, and we fortunately found a gentleman qualified to take his place on the stump as his *locum tenens*. Meanwhile, Mr. North has been enjoying a complete rest, much to his benefit, as you will—"

"Just two minutes," interposed Sam, glancing at his watch. "I love to hear you talk, Ryan, but you know how I'm fixed."

"Will you trouble yourself to call Tom?" said Ryan, smiling. "I believe he has been under your orders since you came here. Ask him to request the gentleman upstairs to step this way."

To make a long story shorter, in half an hour we had John North,—the real John,—not so much the worse for his three weeks' seclusion, safe in the Carews' drawing room; and Sam had earned and received his reward. What Ann and North had to say to each other, I know not; but I hear they are to be married on Christmas eve. Their quarrel, I understand, was on the matter of Ann's wealth. She wanted to give it all to him, and he refused to have anything to do with it. But, now that his invention has been adopted, he will be at least as rich as she. Thanks to the eloquence of his *locum tenens* he was triumphantly elected, and is making himself felt in his new position. The public never has, and will never know how near they came to losing him. Whether the "Boys" know it I can't say. If they do, there are reasons why they won't complain.

Sam is an extraordinary man. His intuition seems to be equal to his knowledge. As for that warrant which he produced so pat to the occasion, I have the best of reasons for believing that it was only a blank form, and that Mr. Ryan was under no obligations to be so obliging as he was. John North was inclined to make it hot for his quondam host at first, but he was persuaded to think better of it, and Mr. Ryan is still an honorable member of the community.

A MODEL MURDER.

IN one of the streets above Union Square, there is a waxwork exhibition known as the "Paradise Museum," or some such name. It has an ornamental *façade*, and the fun begins even before you have bought your ticket. Persons who look real, but who are really wax, stand about the ticket office with intent to deceive. Within are groups and single figures, artfully disposed among the living spectators, and seeming to join with them in admiration of waxen kings and queens, statesmen and musicians, criminals and authors, who are avowedly on exhibition. But should you address to one of them words of friendly inquiry, or ask him to make more room on the bench, or to stand aside and give you a chance to see something, his unresponsiveness and immobility strike you, and, glancing more nar-

rowly at him, you discover that he lacks a soul. The revelation gives you a shock, and you end by distrusting the reality even of your familiar friends.

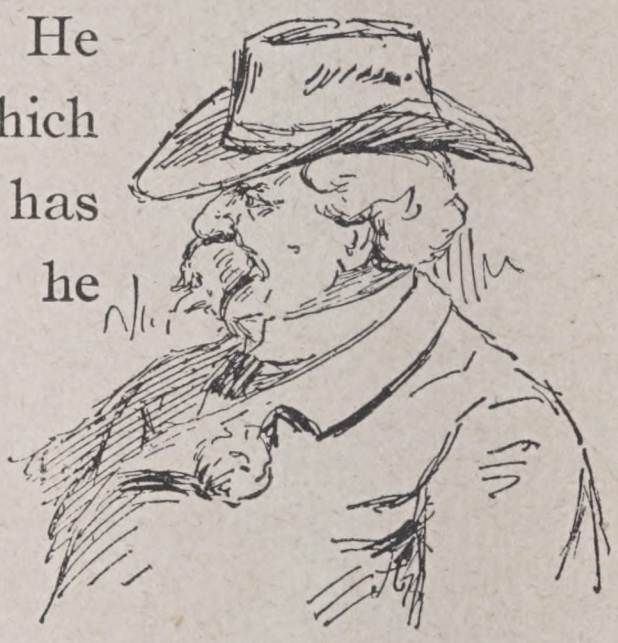
Finding myself the other day with half a dollar in my pocket at the door of this paradisaical institution, I went in to refresh my recollections of the crowned heads and other eminent personages of foreign lands. After exploring the rooms on the ground floor, and resisting the blandishments of more recondite mysteries at ten cents extra, I came to a broad flight of steps leading downward. Descending, I arrived in a sort of crypt, with recesses and branching corridors, wherein were exposed such scenes and characters as, by reason of their ghastly and sinister quality, had been segregated from the more cheerful assemblage upstairs. In the lamplit gloom of this region a dozen or more visitors were strolling about, and among them I was glad to recognize my young friend Mr. Alexander Cholmondely Phipps, and his genial uncle, Major Foljambe.

Mr. Phipps is just twenty years old. On his majority, he will come into possession of a good deal of property; his uncle in the meantime acts as his guardian and trustee. The major is a Virginian, and his military rank was won by gallant

service in the Lost Cause. He is a hearty and winning old gentleman, more of a boy than his nephew, who, indeed, has the air of a man of the world for whom few illusions survive. He has been to Europe (Mr. Phipps has), and has seen society and life on both sides of the Atlantic. He plays the races moderately, drops into Daly's when the other places are shut up, sips a cocktail in the Hoffman House café, discusses with Mr. Edwards the prospects of the coming mill, breakfasts at noon at Delmonico's, has a box or at stall on first nights at the theaters, and arrays himself with an assiduity and taste that prompts one to rejoice that Eve ate the apple. In stature, Mr. Alexander Cholmondely Phipps is not so much tall as short, and more slender than massive; but there is in his gait and bearing a repose and dignity which more than compensate for his physical unimportance. He is, I have been informed, a terrible fellow with women, and a man to stand no nonsense from beings of his own sex. His speech is slow and considered, and he is unable to divest himself, even in this country, of a slight English accent.

Fortunate in so many respects, Mr. Phipps is perhaps especially blessed in his uncle. The major

not only serves as a perfect foil to his nephew, but is lost in admiration of him, quotes his sayings and celebrates his doings, follows him about as a child follows an organ-grinder's monkey, roars at his pleasantries, and backs his opinions. Major Foljambe is six feet high, and weighs two hundred and thirty pounds; his garments are effusive, careless and full of color; his face is fleshy and rosy, his eyes twinkle, his laugh is joyous and contagious, his speech full-lunged and mellow, and soft with the Virginia atmosphere. He retains all the illusions which Alexander Cholmondely has outgrown; and though he tracks about after him as long as he can keep awake, and does his fair share of the birds, bottles, and cigars, his eyes are innocent of iniquity, and his heart is without guile. Altogether, the two make a delectable team.



"By Gad, sah, I'm glad to see you," cried the major, grasping my hand. "Where've yo' been keepin' yo' se'f? Aleck and I tho't we'd take in the show, heah. Oh, let me make yo' acquainted with our friend, Lord Camoys; Aleck used to know

some of his folks abroad. They tell me this is nothing alongside of Mrs. Twoso's, in London."

"Not half bad, though," remarked Lord Camoys, a reserved and well groomed young Englishman, who had acknowledged the introduction with a scrutinizing monocle and a slight bow.

"There's an element of—er—vulgarity in wax-works, don't you know," Mr. Phipps observed, touching his moustache fastidiously with the tip of the ring-finger of his right hand.

"Well, I reckon yo' right about that," the major assented, thoughtfully.

We were standing in front of one of a series of scenes, in which is portrayed the story of a murder. The impressiveness of the scene was somewhat marred by the fact that a couple of workmen were engaged in putting in position a new model of the figure of the murdered man, the original having presumably been injured.

"That's more like life than any of 'em, Camoys," said Phipps, indicating the corpse with the handle of his silver-mounted cane. "I've seen a chap shot, and he looked a good bit like that."

The major shouted with laughter.

"Like life! Ha, ha, ha! By Gad, sah, that's immense! Ain't it? Ha, ha, ha!"

"The corpse was not of your own manufacture, I trust, Mr. Phipps," said I.

"No," he replied, languidly. "I make a point of always going armed, though. No telling what may happen in this country, you know, Camoys. If a fellow insults you, I believe in shooting him, by Jove. Call him out first, of course, and that sort of thing."

"He's right," said the faithful major. "No decent society possible without the code, sah. Show Camoys that little gun of yo's, Aleck."

"It's—er—a neat little thing," said Aleck, producing from his hip-pocket a silver mounted, pearl handled toy of death. "I'll lay I can make a bull's-eye with that at twenty paces, nine times in ten. Take me?"

"Don't care if I do," answered the Englishman. "Hundred even."

"Done. Uncle, you hold the money. We can drop into Burton's gallery on our way up town, and bring it off. Haven't you had enough of this hole?"

"I'm with you, old chap," said his lordship. "I say, by the way, I want you to stop at my hotel and meet my cousin, Mrs. Cavendish. Nice girl. Husband on his way to join her on the next

steamer. She's heard of you, and made me promise to bring you. Fancy you'll like her."

"With the greatest of pleasure, old chap," responded Aleck; and with that the party took their leave, leaving me a good deal interested in Lord Camoys. He seemed to me an unusually observant and thoughtful young Englishman.

Late the next afternoon, I ran into the major on the corner of Thirty-Seventh street and Fifth avenue. He grasped me as if I were a life-preserver in a stormy sea.

"By Gad, my boy, this is luck. Yo' just the man I wanted. Come up to my rooms. Most te'ible thing, sah, that evah was known. Must tell yo' 'bout it. Come up! I'm just 'bout distracted, that I am, sah."

In a few minutes we were in his sitting room. The major did certainly appear to be out of order, as he sank panting into a chair.

Though the weather was cool, he was perspiring profusely. His gray hair was unbrushed. His crimson neck-scarf was untied, and hung down over his rumpled shirt front. His right boot was unbuttoned; his complexion indicated sleeplessness, and there was unaffected anguish in his expression. His tale, in substance, was as follows:

He and Aleck had parted, after the visit to decide the shooting wager at Burton's gallery; Aleck had lost by three points. Aleck and Camoys then went to call on Mrs. Cavendish, and the major repaired to his club. It was understood that the party were to reunite and dine there at seven o'clock, and then go to the opera. At half-past seven, the young men not having appeared, the major ate his dinner alone, smoked his cigar, split a brandy and soda with his friend Colonel Magruder, and looked in at the opera. Neither Aleck nor Camoys were there. Until midnight, the old gentleman strolled about from one resort to another, and then went home. In expectation of Aleck's return, he waited up till two o'clock in the morning, and then fell into an uneasy sleep on the sofa. At nine A. M. he was awakened by the appearance of Camoys, with a very grave face. He held in his hand a sealed letter, written by Aleck, and containing these words:

"DEAR UNCLE:—Lord Camoys will tell you that my life is in danger, and the reason why. I am in hiding, and shall leave the country on the first opportunity. Make a draft for ten thousand dollars, get it cashed, and hand the money to Camoys for me. For God's sake, and as you value my safety, lose no time. If I am discovered before I can get off, it is all up with me. Camoys will explain everything.

"Your affectionate nephew,

"ALEX. C. PHIPPS."

The letter was dated at four o'clock the same morning.

Lord Camoys, on being besought by the agitated major to let him know the worst, related that he and Aleck had, as arranged, called on Mrs. Cavendish. "Mrs. Cavendish," Camoys had observed, "is a very beautiful woman. Your nephew, as you know, is a dangerously fascinating man. Mr. Cavendish, her husband, was an elderly man, infatuated with his young wife, and, unfortunately, insanely jealous of her. It was almost his only foible, except a naturally violent and ungovernable temper."

Camoys went on to say that Aleck and Mrs. Cavendish had at once taken a most extraordinary fancy to one another. It was, in fact, a case of love at first sight. Camoys declared that he had never seen anything like it. At first he became amused, then uneasy, and finally he was alarmed. Nothing he could say availed to restrain the madness of the young people. They seemed to be hurried quite beyond their self-control. At length, in despair, Camoys had started to find the major, in the hope that his influence with his nephew might be effective. To his horror, at the foot of the stairs, he encountered Mr. Cavendish, who had

arrived a day earlier than he had been expected. Camoys tried to prevent him from going upstairs, and then to delay him long enough to give warning to Aleck. But it was in vain; Cavendish became suspicious, rushed upstairs, burst into the room—and found his wife in Aleck's arms.

A terrible scene ensued. After a torrent of violent language Cavendish struck Aleck a blow in the face. Aleck, who, according to Camoys, had remained calm and dignified throughout, could do no otherwise than demand the satisfaction due to the honor of a gentleman. Leaving the hotel and Mrs. Cavendish they proceeded to Camoys' rooms. There the duel took place. Cavendish was foaming with rage; Aleck was composed. At a signal given by Camoys, they fired at a distance apart of ten paces. Aleck's bullet pierced Cavendish's right temple, and the man fell dead.

"Good Gad, sah," moaned the major, mopping his forehead and staring me piteously in the face, "Did yo' evah heah of anythin' so te'ible in yo' bo'n days?"

At my earnest request he resumed his narrative. He had asked Camoys what disposition had been made of the body. The Englishman had replied that it still lay where it had fallen, in his rooms;

and he insisted that the major should accompany him thither and view it. "I am obliged to consider myself, major," he had remarked, "and I cannot undergo alone the responsibility of this tragic affair." He added that out of friendship for Aleck and at his entreaty, he had consented to do the best he could to dispose of the corpse secretly, or, if possible, to feign the case to be one of suicide. For the success of this plan, however, it would be indispensable to buy outright a physician, a detective, a coroner, a judge and a newspaper; and that would make a large hole in ten thousand dollars. Meanwhile, the most pressing duty of the moment was to remove Aleck out of the reach of danger. If caught, he would unquestionably be hanged, which, as Camoys justly observed, would be a pity, since he had behaved admirably all through, and slain his man in fair fight. All this while Camoys had been dragging the reluctant major along to his rooms, where, at this juncture, they arrived. Sick at heart, the major mounted the stairs, and entered the fatal chamber.

"Nevah seen such a awful sight in my life, sah," said the major. "There he lay, on his back, with a hole through his head, welte'ing in his go'h. It made me sick, I assuah you, sah."

"You actually saw him dead, then?" I asked, not a little startled at this consummation; for I confess that I had up to this time hoped that the major's credulity had in some manner been played upon.

"Saw him? Yo' can bet yo' life I saw him," returned the old warrior. "An' in all my wah expe'ience, sah, I nevah encountah'd so ghastly a spectacle."

It had then been close on to ten o'clock, and the banks were open; the money must be drawn out at once. Major Foljambe had expressed to Lord Camoys a desire to see Aleck; but the latter had pointed out that, were they to go together to Aleck's place of concealment, they might be followed by detectives, and thus all their precautions be frustrated.

"Your relationship to him is known," the Englishman had said, "and if anything has leaked out, you would be tracked wherever you go. If you refrain from going near Aleck at present, it's certain he will not be discovered through you; and if I

don't reveal to you where he is, you will be able truthfully to take your oath, if necessary, that you don't know."

The major could not controvert these arguments, and they went to the bank, where the check was drawn and cashed, and the money handed to Camoys. The latter then left him, promising to return and report progress at or before four o'clock. The major had waited till six, and then fearing the worst, had been on his way to visit the offices of all the steamship lines, when he had met me.

"Let us," said I, after an interval of profound consideration, "go down to Six Cent Sam's. There are some features of this thing that strike me as queer. If anybody can help, Sam is the man. Come with me, major, and tell your tale to him."

We repaired to the obscure retreat in question, and I presented the major to Sam. The latter, after hearing the story, said:

"I'm afraid your nephew fell into bad company, major. I have heard of Lord Camoys before. I guess it'll be too late to save the cash, but we will probably be able to rescue Master Aleck. Take us to Camoys' apartments, the first thing."

When we got there, the door was locked; but Sam, who never seemed delayed or disturbed by any obstacle, soon had it open. Within, all was dark; Sam struck a match, and lit the gas. The room thus disclosed was scantily furnished, and the bare table, which stood in the center of the floor, was covered with dust. At the further end of the room was another door, which was closed. We walked round the table, and I saw, with a start, a confused object extended on the floor at my feet. It seemed to be the body of a man, lying on its back, with the face exposed. In the forehead was a gaping wound, from which a dark stream of blood had flowed downward across the cheek, and matted the gray hair. It was, as the major had said, a ghastly spectacle. Sam looked narrowly at it a moment, and then glanced up at us with a curious low chuckle.

"Good Gad, sah?" exclaimed the horrified major, "how can a man with a human heart in his bosom look upon a sight like that and find anything to amuse him? Are you a man, sah?"

"If I am," returned Sam, drily, "that's more than this thing ever was. Besides that, I've seen it before."

"Seen it befo', sah?" cried the major, "how can

that be? Don't I tell yo' that the man was killed only this mawnin', sah?"

"All the same, I saw this corpse as long as six months ago," answered Sam, quietly. "About that time, I happened to look in one day at a place you may never have visited—the Paradise Museum, they call it. This corpse was part of an exhibit in a model of a murder in the Chamber of Horrors there. They have replaced it by another, I suppose, and sold this one for old junk. Your friend Lord Camoys bought it, and has turned it to profitable account, if, as you say, you gave him ten thousand dollars for it. It was a clever trick, though, and I give him credit." So saying, Sam gave the thing a kick, and the waxen face separated from the mass of clothes and the bolster with which it had been connected, and the whole fraud was exposed.

The major stood stupefied. "Tha' must have been somebody killed though," he ejaculated at last. "Where's the real co'pse?"

"He has lived to fight another day, I'm afraid," said Sam. "Perhaps Master Aleck will be able to tell us something about that. Let's ask him."

"We don' know wha' he is, sah," rejoined the major.

"He ought not to be far off," said Sam. "These folk's don't usually go to any unnecessary expense in hiring rooms. Suppose you try that door, sir."

This door was also locked. The major pounded on it. There was no response.

"Speak to him, sir," Sam advised. "Let him know he's among friends."

"Aleck! Aleck, my boy!" shouted the other. "It's me—it's yo' uncle. It's all right. Come out—the whole thing's a damned plant. Open the do'."

A pause. Then the door slowly opened, and the

haggard and hollow-cheeked visage of Aleck timidly peered out. It was only upon renewed assurances of safety that he ventured forth. His knees wavered beneath him, and his voice was a tremulous whisper. After a good deal of more or less unintelligible question and answer on both sides, his version of the terrors of the past night was elicited. It was found to differ in some important particu-

lars from that prepared for the honest major's consumption by their friend Lord Camoys.

According to this statement it would appear that Camoys had, indeed, introduced him to a lady denominated Mrs. Cavendish, and it was not long before she had given him to understand that he had made a deep impression on her heart. A bottle of champagne had helped forward the progress of the passion. After a while, Camoys had discreetly retired. Ere long, however, and at a critical moment, he reappeared, accompanied by a burly and very wrathful gentleman. Mrs. Cavendish had shrieked "My husband," and vanished. The man of wrath, after chasing Aleck round the room in a terrible manner, swore that he would have his life, and went off in search of weapons, bidding Camoys guard him till his return. The latter, however, had very humanely assisted Aleck to escape, and had hurried him to his rooms. There he had informed him that his only chance of life lay in leaving for Europe by the next steamer; it would be still better to make it Patagonia or the Samoan Islands. Mr. Cavendish, he had added, would never rest until he had quaffed Aleck's heart blood; but the more remote the wilderness into which the victim fled,

the longer, of course, was that sanguinary consummation likely to be delayed. Did he need money? Camoys generously offered him all he had in his pockets, amounting to four or five dollars; but Aleck had pointed out that he had money of his own, or which at all events was to become his own, should he be fortunate enough to survive a few months longer. He had then indited the note which Camoys had so obligingly carried to the major. Camoys had left him with the friendly injunction to keep himself safe locked up till his return, which would be, he said, as soon as he could start off Cavendish to the North Pole, or on some other false scent. Camoys had not returned yet, and Aleck had been very hungry, very thirsty, and dreadfully alarmed during some eighteen lonely hours.

During the progress and development of this touching tale the major's countenance was a study. After passing through various stages of crimson, it ended by becoming purple. He called out:

"Wha's yo' revolver, sah?"

"In my pocket, uncle," replied the youth, feebly.

"An' d' yo' mean to tell me, sah, that yo' ran away from that fellow, sah, with yo' tail between

yo' legs, by Gad, instead of shootin' him full o' holes, like a man an' a Southron, an' member of an old an' respected Virginia fam'ly, sah? I blush fo' yo', by Gad, sah. Mo'ovah, yo've been swindled by a lot of o'na'y blacklegs, sah; they've got off with ten thousand dollahs in cash, sah; and 'pon my soul an' sacred honah, sah, I'll petition the legislature to have yo' decla'ed *non compos mentis*, sah; an' if yo' ever get out of the asylum fo' imbeciles, yo'll be kept fo' the rest of yo' mis'able existence on twelve dollahs a week, sah."

This was hardly quite just on the major's part, inasmuch as he too had not escaped being hoodwinked by the too seductive Lord Camoys. But the scolding will do Mr. Alexander Cholmondely Phipps no harm. He puts on no high airs now, and his speech has quite lost all traces of the cockney idiom. He trots about meekly in the major's wake. It is he that laughs at the major's jokes now, with a sad and perfunctory cackle.

As for Lord Camoys, Mr. and Mrs. Cavendish, and that ten thousand dollars cash, they have not yet been heard from.

THE SYMPOSIUM.

AS Christmas drew near, I received an invitation from my old friend Six Cent Sam to eat a Christmas dinner at his establishment. It was an enjoyment not to be foregone, and I accepted with alacrity and thanks. The hour was eight P. M., before which time the modest establishment of the man of mystery had been closed for business. On arriving, I found about a dozen other guests, most of whom were unknown to me. Evening dress was not worn. Sam received me with his usual undemonstrative but cordial hospitality, and, taking my arm, led the way into the dining room.

We were seated at a round table, and, so far as position was concerned, were therefore all on a footing of equality; nevertheless, now as at all times, Sam's seat was, like Rob Roy MacGregor's,

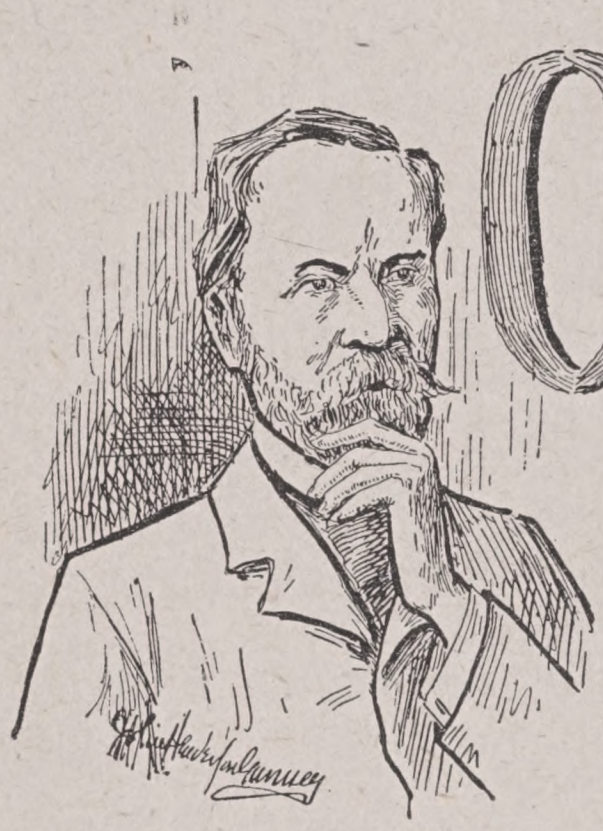
the head of the table. The dinner was a great, good, solid feast, such as one seldom gets a chance at in these degenerate times; we had roast-beef and plum-pudding, besides innumerable lesser joys; plenty of sound claret and Burgundy, and, at dessert, some of my friend Lorenz Reich's far-famed Tokay. By the time the last course was removed, every man at table felt as if he was in the enjoyment of an income of $100,000 a year, with none of the anxiety and distress which such an encumbrance is reputed to bring with it. There was a general sentiment of full-fledged content, and each man looked at his brother with a feeling of good will and mutual congratulation. Then Sam struck on the table with his knife handle, and rose to his feet amid a general murmur of applause.

"My good friends," began Sam, "I am not going to make you a speech, nor shall I call upon anyone else to do so. There's nothing formal about this dinner; all we want, I take it, is to meet one another and have a good time. But, after eating one's fill, the mind naturally turns to poetry and romance. Now, I have reason to believe that there are among us a number of good fellows who have had experiences worth telling about, or who have at least heard something that the rest of us

would be glad to share their knowledge of. So I mean to ask them to tell us their stories, one after the other; and after you are all done, and the time to say good-bye comes, I will tell you the reason why I have done myself the pleasure and honor to ask you to meet me here to-night. Well, then, if we are all ready, I will ask the gentleman sitting opposite me to begin. Tragedy or comedy—it's all grist that comes to this mill; and if it's to be tragedy, I guess we are better able to stand it now than we may be to-morrow morning."

When the applause that followed these remarks had subsided, the personage whom Sam had designated pushed back his chair, and threw his napkin on the table. He was a grave and thoughtful looking gentleman, and his profession, I have grounds for thinking, was that of purveying to publishers the material out of which they supplied themselves with city mansions, horses and carriages, boxes at the opera, and the like necessities of existence. He twisted his short beard between his fingers for a few moments, and then, with his eyes fixed upon an oil portrait that hung over the mantelpiece, he spoke as follows:

THE AUTHOR'S STORY.



ON Fifth avenue, one Sunday afternoon, a year or two ago, a beautiful girl passed me. That is no uncommon thing; but a circumstance drew my attention to it. She had just before stopped to speak with some one and a smile was lingering on her face as she went by me. The influence of the meeting was about her like a pleasant perfume, setting her momentarily apart from her actual surroundings; the thought of him was with her still, imparting a tender privacy to her—for it seemed to me that she loved him.

I thought, "He's a lucky fellow!" and wondered who he might be. He was in the crowd ahead of me—the smiling, well dressed, leisurely crowd that flows to and fro along the avenue at that hour. I had only to quicken my pace to overtake him and determine what manner of man he was. A lucky fellow, certainly. For she was indeed a beautiful

girl. Twenty years in this climate gives the perfection of maidenly development; she was so sweetly proportioned that her figure dwelt like a musical harmony in the memory. Her grace in walking gratified the eye and also the sense of sex; it was the movement of a woman, with the lovely womanly differences from all that is masculine. She was not a mere face and costume, but a complete creature, attractive all over. Whether she were richly or simply dressed—in or out of the fashion—I had not noticed. I felt the human loveliness of form and limb, as one remembers the beauty of a picture or a statue. That is a rare impression nowadays; and I thought of her as a foreigner—foreign, at least, to dry conventions. She was at all points alive, with the repose and simplicity of genuine life.

This warm, fragrant quality in her, distinguishing her from the mass of handsome women, was as virginal as it was feminine. Old Italian artists have painted such maidens, rich in promise of passion, but untouched as the dawn. She had the auburn hair and pearly flesh of Titian, and the ardent temperament, which yet, until it was aroused, might be colder than the common. I did not make all these observations at the moment.

Thinking over my glimpse of her afterward, I filled in the outlines and indications, and made a character that may or may not have been hers.

Meantime I had nearly overtaken the man with whom she had spoken, and as he turned his face aside I recognized him as Linden the artist. I was only half pleased, for, although Linden could tell me who the girl was, and be the means of my seeing her again if I wished to, I should have preferred to let the whole episode remain in the region of memory and imagination, when I could deal with it according to my own will. Facts are apt to be clumsy, especially when they are concerned with beautiful women. In this prosaic age, beauty forfeits a charm as soon as it becomes identified with a name. I did not care to hear that this auburn haired girl was some Miss Manhattan, living in a certain house on the Hill, and to be

dowered on her marriage with such and such a fortune. I wanted to think of her as some mediæval Italian princess who had appeared to me mystically for a moment and would never be seen again. Linden would spoil all that, though, to be sure, there was no need of my saying anything to him about her. He would not be likely to volunteer information.

However, I joined him, and we asked each other where we had been all this while, and what we had been doing. It was, I believe, several months since we had met. Linden was a man one does not run across at hotels or clubs, and his visiting list was small; his studio, on the other hand, was in an out of the way locality; so it was easy to keep out of his way. He was a man of force and originality, but not adaptable; not kindly disposed to the fads and foibles of the day, and not averse from expressing his aversion. He was naturally not popular, among his fellow-artists especially. He would not allow that there was merit in any work but the best. He declared that an artist who painted anything but masterpieces was a disgrace to the calling, and that it might be a good thing to kill him. The production of pot boilers was, to his thinking, rank dishonesty. It is true

that he held himself to his own high standard, but then he would accept no criticism save his own, and he regarded himself as equal to any of the old masters.

Now, self-conceit in a young painter is not unheard of; the strange thing in Linden's case was that his pictures were really good. There was something in them to be found in the work of none of his contemporaries. They were original, and each painting meant something. Sometimes this meaning would be conveyed chiefly by the color, sometimes by the form, sometimes by both alike. There was deep thought in them, and the manipulation of a strong, penetrating, unique mind. To study them was to become interested not in the painting only, but in the painter too. You might not always like them, but their power and beauty were not to be denied. I can fancy a sensitive person of a certain temperament being painfully agitated by them. They had a life; they suggested different things in different moods; they seemed to grow and change from day to day. The subjects treated were peculiar; sometimes landscape, sometimes figure. They were dominated by an intense idea, which gradually shone through the composition and touched you more than the

visible symbol. With all his profound insight and lofty imagination, it always appeared to me that something was lacking or awry in Linden's character. There were dark, unholy traits in him. Like the Persian Omar, he joined in himself heaven and hell, and God as well as man. Combined with an exquisite delicacy, therefore, there was occasionally a cruelty and impiety in his productions that made one recoil, as if a serpent had hissed from the bosom of a flower.

His pictures are little known to the public because he would not sell them (he had an independent property and was not dependent on his brush), and was even averse to showing them to people he did not know and like. His studio was on the top floor of an old fashioned house on the west side of the city, belonging to himself. He was unmarried —I was about to say as a matter of course; at any rate, I had never thought of him as likely to change his bachelorhood. He was able enough, heaven knows, to win a woman and make her happy, but he looked upon himself mainly as an agent for the vindication and expansion of art, and sank the

personal question. Had he thought the interests of art demanded it, he would have married a new wife every day—or with the same passionate persistence, have remained chaste and celibate all his life long. As it was, marriage was something about which he did not trouble himself, save to interpret its philosophic meaning in terms of art.

Well, as I said, we walked down the avenue together, and soon Linden had got on some topic that interested him—for that matter, he would never talk long on any topic that did not interest him—and in order to make things easier we turned off at Thirty-Fourth street and went westward. The noise of the crowded avenue died away and we were in comparative solitude, and Linden's deep, quick voice was the sound now clearly audible.

"There is a moment in every life when it touches its most expressive, most characteristic point. It should stop there. It is a waste and a crime to live longer."

"How are you to know when you get to it?" I inquired.

"Let your neighbors decide."

"How many people would be left alive at the end of a year?"

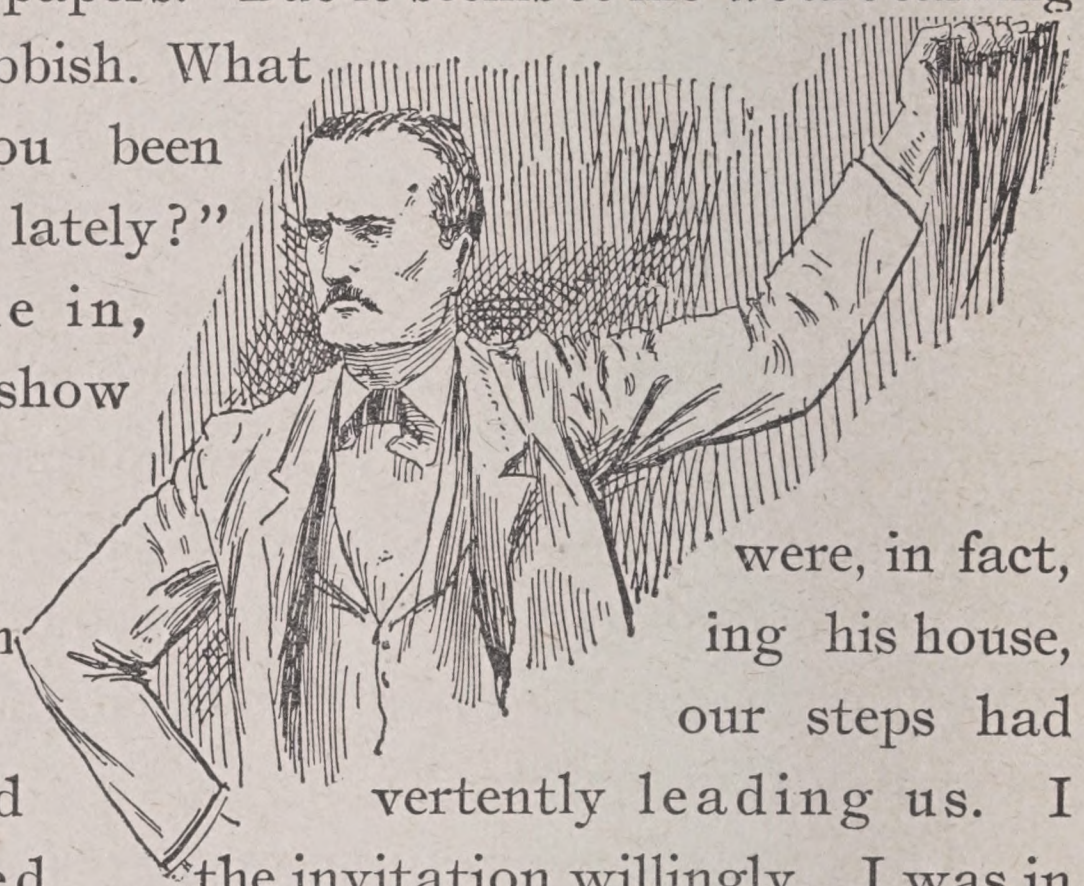
"By the time the world is wise enough to admit the truth of my principle it will be wise enough to act upon it justly. And no man or woman who is truly sane would care to prolong his existence beyond the epoch at which he began to retrograde."

"Suppose you were in love with a woman—married to her, say—and you found one morning that she was a shade less good looking than the day before, would you, on that account, cut the throat of the mother of your children and the companion of your life?"

"The manner of your question involves a logical contradiction," answered Linden. "You are putting her mere physical beauty against her maternity and wifehood—her body against her soul. No; but if I saw that motherhood had ceased to be a supreme joy to her, and that wifehood had begun to lose its glory and sanctity, I should think it time for her to die, whether or not her face and form were as beautiful as before."

"Before applying your principle, as you call it, to other people, you had better test it on yourself," I remarked. "In other cases your reforming zeal would be interrupted by the hangman, but if you put yourself out of the way nothing more

could be done to you than to put your obituary in the newspapers. But it seems to me we are talking great rubbish. What have you been painting lately?"



"Come in, and I'll show you."

We were, in fact, approaching his house, whither our steps had been inadvertently leading us. I accepted the invitation willingly. I was in the vein to look at his pictures. If he had begun to retrograde I might offer him his choice of ways to die. I presume Linden kept a servant, though I never saw one in his house. He unlocked the door and we went upstairs. The lower part of the house was dark and silent. But the opening of the door of the studio brought us to a glow of light and color. Linden was not one of those artists who make their studios merely a neutral background for their pictures. The room itself was a picture—subtle and splendid. It was designed on a scheme of color that I will not attempt to describe, but its effect was to bring on a gradually

increasing glow of pleasurable emotion. Colors move the heart like music, though on a remoter plane. Probably they are visible music, with forms, too, of their own.

There were long drooping draperies, panels of oriental tiles, rich monotones of wall, mirrors here and there, and singular pieces of furniture. The grouping and the light led the eye to the upper end of the room where stood the easel, with a picture in the frame upon it. A piece of black gauzy cloth covered it like a shroud, or like the mystery before birth. Linden offered me tobacco and whisky, and paced about the room, smoking a pipe. For several minutes he was taciturn and abstracted.

"Are you awaiting inspiration?" I asked, at length.

"Inspiration is to take your life in your hand," said he. "It's as dangerous as standing on a precipice in the dark. If it's complete, you know, over you go!"

"I don't quite catch your idea. Isn't inspiration what we're all after?"

"A long way after," said Linden, whose efforts at humor were as lightsome and felicitous as the waltzing of elephants. "I'm talking from my own

standpoint. A full inspiration is transfiguration —man becomes God. If the result be perfect—a perfect work, that he recognizes as such—it's the end of him. He can never get beyond it; he can never even equal it, for to the individual only one true creation is possible. In other words, he has passed his apogee, and the end is come."

"Oh, I see! His best picture is his death warrant?"

"It's just that."

"Well, have you painted yours yet?"

Instead of answering me, Linden went up to the easel and pulled off the veil. Then, without glancing at the canvass, he took his seat in a chair, with his back toward the picture and his face toward me.

"Why, that's the very girl!" was my first exclamation.

"What the devil do you mean by that?" demanded Linden, slowly.

I had been surprised into the statement and now regretted having made it. But it was too late to recede. "I passed her half an hour ago on the avenue. Just before I met her she had spoken to you. So she is your model? She is worth immortalizing, and I don't know but you've done it."

"A curious chance!" he muttered. "That comes of gadding about. Yes, she is the basis of that picture; but no one but you and I and she thinks it. And so you think I've done it, do you? Well, it was sure to come sooner or later!"

"Who is she?" I asked.

"She is the picture. That's all you or anybody else is ever likely to know."

The picture showed a girl, all but a woman, seated in a broad cushioned chair with a background of warm obscurity. She leaned on her left elbow; the finger tips of the other hand rested lightly on her right breast. Her air was profoundly abstracted; the eyes looked on yours without seeing you. Her hair fell voluminously behind her shoulders. The upper part of the figure was nude; across her knees a mantle was thrown. A touch more would have made the picture voluptuous to the point of sensuality. But the power of the artist was shown in his forbearance. The girl, for all the sumptuousness of her beauty, was maidenhood incarnate. All life was in her potency, but she was pure of all experience. Formed though she was for love and passion, she had never known their approach. She was a stranger to that for

which she was created. She knew not even that she was beautiful.

And yet what thought was it, in the depths of her shadowy eyes, that withdrew her to such remote regions of meditation? What mystery was she trying to solve? Was she aware of an insufficiency that she could not name? Did she fancy the defect was in her own nature, or that she was to find its remedy elsewhere? No one can fathom the mysteries of a girl's soul, nor can she herself give them expression. To touch them is to annihilate them. We may recognize their presence and know their absence, but what they are we can never know. What is love before love begins?

"You have painted more than your eyes saw," I remarked, after a silence. "No girl of our era will be like that. It's an ideal—what might be, but is not."

"No; she is just that," Linden replied. "All I have done is to choose the mood and the woman. I call it 'The Day Before Love.' I don't say such a creature is common, in this age or in any other; she may be unique. But there she is, safe as long as the canvass holds together." He turned and looked at it as he spoke. His face, at first gloomy, gradually lighted up with a rapt, exalted expres-

sion. "No greater picture was ever painted," he said in an undertone, and then, more audibly, "It is the greatest!"

"It is good," said I. "You have done worse, and you may do better."

"I wish your criticism was worth anything," he replied quietly. "The time may come when you can see what is now hidden from you. Taking you at your own highest valuation, I can only say you might grow up to this picture. You can never grow beyond it."

"If you don't die of perfection, you'll die of conceit, my boy," I said, scornfully. "Who ever heard of such a fuss over a portrait of one's favorite model? Where did you find her, by the way? She's an exotic, isn't she?"

"Nobody will ever know who she is, or what. She is there," pointing to the canvas, "and nowhere else. For that she was born, and having been the means of producing that, through me, she disappears. That's all."

This absurd posing, as I regarded it, provoked me. "I think you exaggerate," I said. "It was strongly borne in on me on the avenue just now that this young lady was in love with you, and from the ardor with which you have evidently

painted her portrait I should not be surprised to hear that you were in love with her. 'The Day Before Love' you call it. I call it 'The Day After.'"

"If you wish us to remain friends you'll stop there!"

"Don't be such a donkey, Linden, I believe you are cracked. The first symptom of paresis is inordinate self-conceit. You are a clever painter, but I know a dozen as good or better. You over-estimate that picture because you are gone on the girl. I dare say she's a good girl, but she's a model after all. If other painters haven't had her before you, they will hereafter. You live so much to yourself that you've lost all sense of proportion. She's no goddess and isn't going to disappear. She's too good looking for that. I only hope she may get comfortably married and have children as pretty as she is."

"Your hopes may go for what they are worth," returned Linden, with an odd smile. "You mean well, perhaps, but I did wrong to bring you here. You must pardon my saying that I will be busy the rest of the day, and must be alone. The picture requires one more sitting, you see, and then all will be finished."

"All right," said I, getting up. "When I see you next I trust you'll be in a more reasonable state of mind."

"It's possible," said he, and then he accompanied me down to the street door, and I heard him lock it after me.

Thinking over the matter, I regretted having lost my temper; but I believed that it would do Linden good to have heard some plain language. He had, seriously, painted a wonderful picture—a grand work of art. It was his masterpiece, no doubt, and the model was worthy of the renown it would reflect upon him. But he was behaving ridiculously, nevertheless, and deserved a little snubbing.

This was Sunday. On Monday I went about my affairs and Linden and his picture went out of my mind. On Tuesday the papers were full of his name, and, after reading the reports with groans of grief and horror, I hurried to his house to do whatever I could do in the circumstances.

It was thought at first to have been a case of double suicide, but this I never believed. Linden killed himself, but he killed the girl first. Whether he had given her warning of his purpose can never be certainly known. I don't believe he did, for

there were no signs of a struggle, and she was not a woman to die complacently. She was found carefully laid out on a divan in the embrasure of the eastern window. But she had been murdered on the cushioned seat where she had been posing for the picture, and the blow had been struck unawares and was immediately fatal. It was with a weapon scarcely thicker than a knitting needle, and had pierced the heart obliquely, leaving on the skin beneath the left breast only a small blue mark, not noticeable at a first glance. The dead girl's face was quiet and happy in expression, and more beautiful, if possible, than in life. It was a transfigured face: the reflection of a pure, virgin spirit. The face of the portrait seemed to ponder over a mystery. The face of the dead was that of clear vision. It looked not into a mystery, but out of a mystery that was even greater.

Linden had not slain himself in the same manner. After laying out the girl he had stood in front of

the portrait and sent a bullet through the center

of his brain. His body was found face down on the floor, the revolver in his hand.

What had been his motive for committing these crimes? There was much speculation on the subject. Some said it was jealousy; some that it was insanity. That he was insane, indeed, I have no doubt; but there was method in his madness. My talk with him on the last day of his life gave me a clue possessed by no one else. The incarnation of perfect maidenhood should remain immaculate. The girl—whose name and origin were never discovered—had reached the fulness of a spiritual state, and he had resolved she should never go beyond it. She should die. The type of maidens fit for love, but innocent of love's embrace. She should die, but, through the picture, she should be immortal. Death consecrated both her and it.

Linden killed himself because he believed that his highest work had been done. He could never paint again as he had painted then, and he would not live to be tempted to fall below that standard. On his own theory, he was already dead as to the power that gave him the right to live. But there is another question that I have often asked myself, but cannot answer. Did Linden love the girl? Did she love—or was she ready to love him? If so, no

common tragedy was consummated on the day they died. It was death for an ideal, and something more—an act of self-abnegation seldom paralleled.

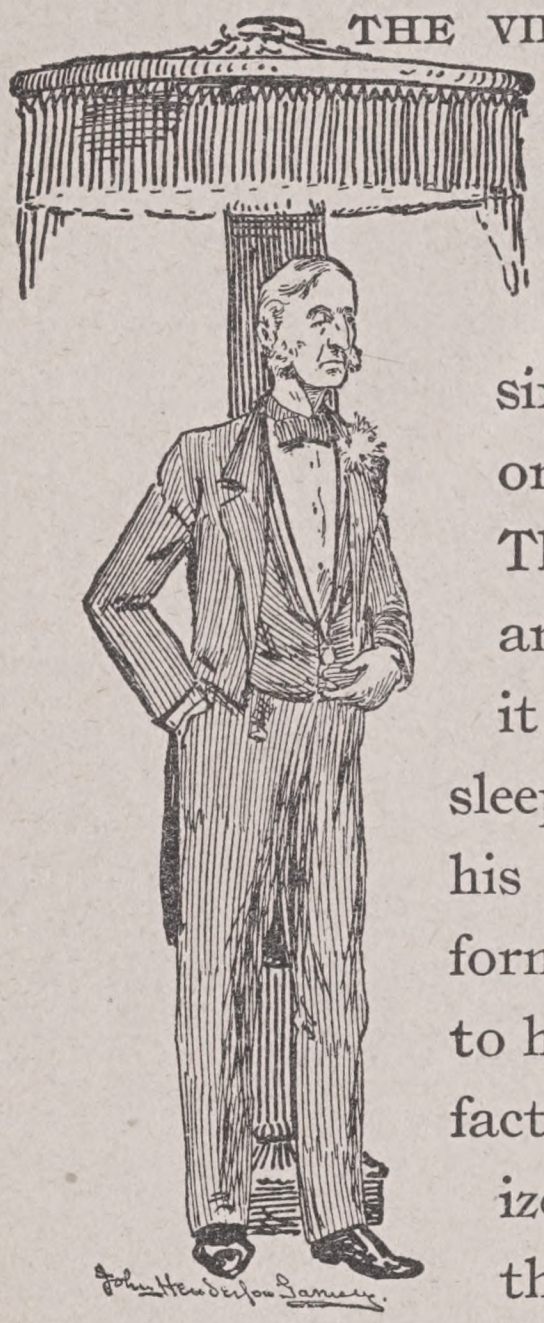
* * *

The story being ended, "Well," remarked a ruddy faced, full bodied individual, with a bald head and a white neck-scarf, in which was stuck a pin of antique and curious workmanship, "Well, if the gentleman's friend had n't killed himself, and if I had been on the jury that tried him, I should have been inclined to vote for hanging him; such self-abnegation as is hinted at is too high-strung to be encouraged in the materialistic age we live in. Now, it may be owing to my avocation,—I am a collector of curiosities of all kinds—anything really unique, from a live mastodon to a lost book of Livy is my game,—it may be, I say, because this pursuit of mine brings me into contact with my fellow creatures on their least favorable side; or it may be a general fact, I won't pretend to decide; but at all events, I have not found that self-abnegation is the rule among mankind in the nineteenth century. My experience is, that we all want the best there is to be had at as much below its value as it can be had; and the other fellows want to

charge us A 1 prices for Z 26 articles, if I may so express myself. My creed may lack novelty; but on the score of average experience I'll back it against the next man's. As an instance in point, I will—since yarn-spinning is the thing to-night—recall a little incident that came to my knowledge not long ago, and all I would like to premise about it is that, under the name of the leading character in the tale, I am not disgüising myself. I am too wily a bird to be caught by such chaff; though there's no denying that the chaff was very good of its kind."

Hereupon, at a nod from Sam, the round-bodied gentleman pulled down his waistcoat and launched into the exciting narrative given below:

THE VIRTUOSO'S STORY.



HROGMORTON HAGGETT was a lean, gray haired, high featured gentleman, sixty-three years old. He had one ambition and one regret. The ambition beset him by day and night. He meditated upon it in his waking hours. In his sleep it often formed the tissue of his dreams. These dreams uniformly depicted a successful issue to his desires; but, as a matter of fact they had never been realized. He hated to wake up in the morning, because he knew he would awake to disappointment; and he hated to fall asleep at night, because he knew he would become the victim of deceiving visions. Thus he was never at ease. The only thing to be done was to labor diligently to find evidence for his theory, and this labor had gradually become the controlling aim of his existence. Being wealthy and a bachelor, he was able to use his time as he

pleased, and this was the way in which it pleased him to use it.

As for the theory, or the ambition,—for they amounted to the same thing,—it possessed many theoretical merits, the chief one lacking being that of novelty. Mr. Haggett would have preferred that it should possess this also; but he consoled himself with the reflection that, if he could only vindicate it, he would enjoy two triumphs: first the vindication; and secondly, that he would have been the first to succeed of many who had tried. His name would be rendered immortal. Only there was the "if"!

The theory was, that Bacon was the author of "Shakespeare." Mr. Haggett had familiarized himself with all the extant controversial literature on the subject, beginning with Miss Delia Bacon's "The Philosophy of Shakespeare's Plays Unfolded," and coming down to the ingenious analysis of a recent American student. He had, besides, copies of the various original editions of the plays, and of every work that bore in any way upon either Shakespeare or Bacon. He had secured photographic copies of Baconian letters and manuscripts of various dates, and of all Shakespeare's alleged signatures. The entire history of the Elizabethan

period was at his fingers' ends. He had even gotten so far as to determine exactly what it was he was looking for in the way of conclusive evidence. More than once he had imparted this to one of his very few friends and confidants, a certain vendor of second-hand books, by the name of Philemon Inkpenny & Co.

"It stands to reason, Philemon," he would say, "that negotiations must have been carried on between Lord Verulam and Shakespeare regarding this matter. As a rule, no doubt, these negotiations would be by personal interview. But occasionally they must have been conducted by correspondence; and although, as a measure of precaution, there would have been an understanding that this correspondence should be destroyed, yet the doctrine of chances warrants us in the belief that some fragments of it have survived. And over and above that, Philemon, it is to be remembered that a man of Shakespeare's low and tricky character would have been most apt to preserve some written evidence of Bacon's authorship, to be possibly used against him for purposes of extortion. I am convinced, consequently, that some such documentary evidence exists; and, should life be spared me, I will find it."

"Bless me, Mr. Haggett," Philemon would reply, cheerfully, "you're good for thirty years yet! And you look to me a man to carry out what you undertake, sir."

"Well, I think you may say that without flattery, Philemon. Besides, my good friend,—though I should not say this to everyone, you understand,—but it is sometimes borne in on me that I am under Providential guidance in this matter. I have had dreams, Philemon! The other night, now, I dreamt that a strange old man visited me and imparted information of consummate value. A very vivid dream, that was—more like a vision. I should know that old man's face again at once, were I to meet him."

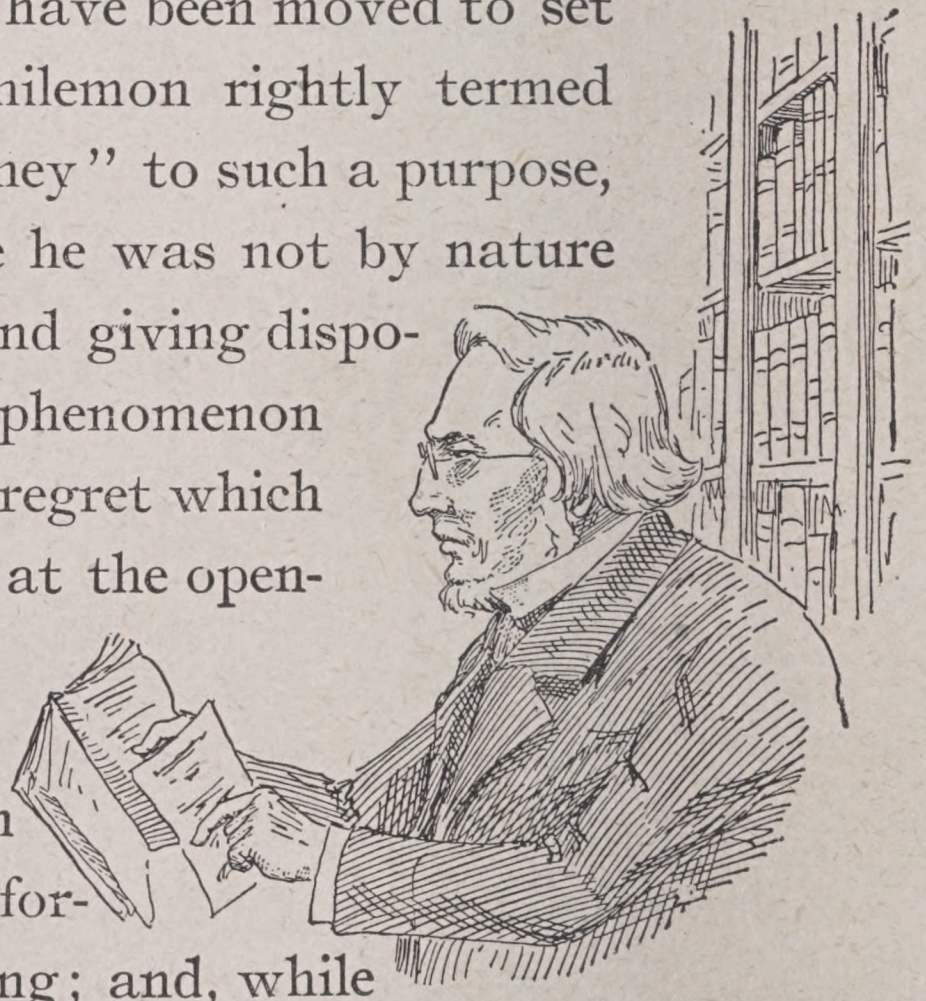
"Which I dare say you will, sir," responded Philemon, as he finished inserting a title page into a first edition of Reynolds' "God's Revenge against the Crying and Execrable Sin of Murther," from which it had been missing. "And you might, as like as not, find what you want hid between the leaves of just some such old volume as this, sir."

"Yes, it may be so, Philemon," returned Throgmorton Haggett, his gaunt cheeks flushing and his small gray eyes glinting. "But, come what may, the individual who affords me such hints or assist-

ance as shall directly result in my discovering the evidence in question will receive a pecuniary acknowledgment in the form of my check for ten thousand dollars! But don't mention that, Philemon," added Mr. Haggett, adjusting his spectacles and regarding the bookseller with some anxiety. "I should be overrun with cranks and adventurers, you know."

"To be sure, to be sure," said Philemon Inkpenny. "And ten thousand dollars—that is a sum of money! It is a sum of money, Mr. Haggett!"

How happened it that Mr. Haggett, rich though he was, should have been moved to set apart what Philemon rightly termed "a sum of money" to such a purpose, especially since he was not by nature of a gushing and giving disposition? The phenomenon arose from the regret which we referred to at the opening of this narrative.



Throgmorton Haggett had formerly been young; and, while in that relatively defenseless condition, he had fal-

len in love with Dorothy Haselfoot. The vicissitudes of that passion cannot be recounted here. All was going on well, and Dorothy was looking forward with a chastened joy to becoming Mrs. Haggett. But there was another young man about—an artist, Gabriel Hastings. He and Throgmorton had been friends since their school days. He conceived a purely artistic regard for Dorothy, who was a comely maiden; and, at Throgmorton's own suggestion, he undertook to paint her portrait. While the portrait was in progress, however, the demon of jealousy entered Throgmorton's soul. There was no more warrant for it than existed in the famous case of Othello vs. Othello, Cassio co-respondent. It resulted in unpleasant scenes, however, and finally in the rupture of the engagement. Throgmorton, who had already presented his intended with a piece of real estate valued at ten thousand dollars, gave her a very broad hint that circumstances alter cases. She, in pursuance of Ophelia's theory that rich gifts seem poor when givers prove unkind, promptly handed him back the title deed. A year later, she and Gabriel were married—a union of mutual esteem, and perhaps also, on Gabriel's part, of a romantic sense of honor. They had a daughter

Edith, but no other stroke of good fortune; and, having been poor to start with, they rapidly became more so. Gabriel died. His widow, at the end of her resources, humbled her pride for the sake of her daughter, and applied to her former lover for help. He had, meanwhile, sold the piece of real estate for fifteen thousand dollars. Nevertheless, he refused Dorothy's request, in a letter of which few high-minded gentlemen would have wished to be known as the author. Dorothy died, and Edith disappeared. As years went by, and Throgmorton Haggett grew richer and richer and more and more lonely, the regret above mentioned began to haunt him. He wished he had not recalled that gift of ten thousand dollars. He even advertised for Edith, with a view to making restitution; but nothing came of that. The ten thousand dollars lay heavy on his conscience. At last, to ease the weight, he actually deposited that sum in the bank, with a view to disposing of it according to the contingency he stated to Philemon Inkpenny. Of course, it was possible that the contingency might not arise; but what more could he do? And meanwhile he was drawing interest on the sum, just the same.

One morning, while Mr. Haggett was in his study, critically comparing a paragraph in Bacon's "Advancement of Learning," concerning the impropriety of putting young men to the study of moral philosophy, with a somewhat parallel passage in "Troilus and Cressida," Act II, scene 2, a servant knocked at the door and informed him that there was an elderly party who wished to know if he might see him on a matter of business.

The party was admitted. He was a venerable individual, about seventy years of age apparently, decently but poorly clad, and carrying under his arm a bundle tidily done up in an old newspaper. He performed a ceremonious obeisance, and spoke as follows:

"Mr. Haggett, I hope the object of my intrusion may excuse my intruding. My name is Christopher Crumblehorne. I have been a student, like yourself; but I am poor. During my life, I have collected a good many books,—old books, Mr. Haggett,—including some rare early editions of the Elizabethan poets. I am informed that you are interested in Shakespearian researches. I have here"—he had been undoing his bundle as he

spoke, and now produced an antique and worm-eaten volume bound in brown leather—"a copy of plays by Christopher Marlowe, dated, as you see, 1611. As you are aware, Marlowe is reputed to have collaborated on certain of the plays ascribed to Shakespeare."

All this while, Haggett had been staring at his visitor as if he were a phœnix, a spectre, or some other improbable phenomenon. The longer he stared, the more amazed and bewildered did he appear. Well, it is certainly not often that one has better cause to be surprised; for this old gentleman presented neither more nor less than the living counterpart of the personage whom Mr. Haggett had beheld in his dream, as related to Philemon Inkpenny! Was the rest of the vision, then, to be confirmed? He took the book with a trembling hand. He turned over the leaves mechanically, hardly aware of what he was doing. The volume was not in very good condition. Here and there, passages were interlined in faded ink. Its original owner had evidently read it thoroughly; and with critical if not sympathetic interest. Still it was not obvious how any enlightenment could proceed from it as to the true authorship of Shakespeare's dramas. Mr. Haggett overcame his agitation

sufficiently to make some remark to this effect to Mr. Christopher Crumblehorne.

"Possibly," the latter replied, "but have you carefully examined the title page?"

Mr. Haggett turned to it. At first, he glanced at it carelessly. After a moment, he started and his face became red. He stole a strange look at his visitor. He snatched off his spectacles, rubbed them, and looked again. Anon, he laid the book on the table, reached for a huge magnifying-glass, and studied the page intently. Finally, he laid down the glass, leaned back in his chair, and contemplated Mr. Crumblehorne several moments in silence.

"May I ask, sir, how you obtained this volume?" he inquired, at length.

"At a second-hand book-shop in London, just off the Strand, in 1856," replied the other, composedly. "I thought it might interest you."

"A signature of William Shakespeare's!" muttered Mr. Haggett. "Why, it's an historical event! And this book was his! But it can't be! Can it be genuine?"

"I have gradually arrived at that conviction during the four-and-thirty years that it has been in my possession," answered the old gentleman.

"I have here," he added, "noted down some of the reasons that go to confirm me in my opinion. A glance at them will put you in possession of my train of argument. Pray take your own time."

He handed the other several closely written pages of blue note-paper. Mr. Haggett perused them with absorbed attention. After ten or fifteen minutes, he raised his head and passed a hand over his forehead.

"And do I understand that you wish to dispose of this book, sir?" he said, in a slightly tremulous voice. "What value do you put upon it?"

"I sell it reluctantly," replied the old man, "because I am old and need money to support life. My price for it is one hundred dollars."

Mr. Haggett concealed his emotions by a violent effort. He had expected to have to pay at least a thousand. After a pause, he faltered out:

"I might give you fifty."

Mr. Crumblehorne rose. "I cannot accept it," he said, with a sigh. "I named my lowest figure. If you cannot afford it, I must try elsewhere." And he put forth his aged hand and laid it upon the book.

"Well, well," said Mr. Haggett, hastily, "after all, I may as well stretch a point. It is an extrav-

agance; but, to a brother student—I will write you a check. But—a hundred dollars! Suppose we say seventy-five?"

The old man shook his head. "A hundred or nothing."

Mr. Haggett wrote the check. Mr. Crumblehorne pocketed it in a serene, methodical manner, bowed and withdrew. Mr. Haggett spent the rest of the day hanging over his treasure. That evening, he received a letter that agitated him on other grounds. It was signed Edith Hastings—the long lost daughter of his old love. It recounted the leading facts of her history since her mother's death. She had, it appeared, developed a fine soprano voice, and had found a patron who defrayed the expense of training it. She had sung with success in concert in England and on the Continent, and was now in America with a snug little fortune. She had accidentally learned that her mother's old friend—so she called him—was living in Philadelphia, and would do herself the pleasure of calling on him. She appointed the next day for her visit.

She came, saw, and conquered Throgmorton Haggett. And well she might, for she was a young woman of beauty, talent, and vivacity. Moreover, she soon conceived a most flattering regard

for the elderly student, and showed an intelligent interest in his pursuits. He presently insisted upon her and her maid's taking up their abode in his home. Before she had been there a week he had intimated to her that, if she would remain permanently his guest and give up her public career, he would make her his heiress. She did not give an unconditional assent to this proposition, for it was easy to see that the applause of audiences had become dear to her; but neither did she absolutely refuse. Meanwhile, she staid on. She entered into all Mr. Haggett's ways of life. She helped him in his investigations. She encouraged him to persevere. He had never in his life been so happy. His conscience was at ease. His hopes were brightened. He began to feel a young man again. Nay, he even began to ask himself, whether a well-preserved and wealthy gentleman of sixty-three might not with success propose a matrimonial alliance with a gifted and charming young lady of five-and-twenty!

"Have you noticed, *mon ami*," she said, "that there is something odd about the binding of this book?"

She was sitting in the easy-chair in the embrasure of the study window, dressed in an adorable

negligé. Her bare, polished arms emerged from the half sleeves; her white throat was fully revealed, with the delicate necklace of carved coral round it, the gift of her devoted Throgmorton; one knee was thrown over the other, causing the ruffled hem of her petticoat to discover a tapering silken ankle and arched foot shod in a high-heeled French slipper. In her fragrant lap was the old volume of Marlowe's plays.

The scholar rose from his desk and came over to her, glad of a pretext to be in contact with her dainty loveliness. He placed a chair close to her own, adjusted his spectacles, and bent over her. "And what is there odd about the binding, my dear?" he said, tenderly.

"Why, see: this paper that is pasted on the inside of the back cover is cracked all along the inside edge. And look: the cover seems to be double, as if there were a sort of pocket in it, such

as one sees inside the lid of a desk. Give me your paper-knife—yes, there is a pocket; and I do believe—"

"Edith!" broke in Throgmorton, in a high, quavering voice, "let me—give me—what is this? My stars! has it come at last?"

With hands shaking as with a palsy, he tore out the paper lining, he tore open the pocket, he drew from it—what? A faded, stained, fragile, embrowned fold of letter paper. He began to unfold it, but his nerves were too much unstrung. "You—you—" he said, faintly, holding it out to Edith.

She opened it deftly with her tapering white fingers.

"What can it be, I wonder? Such a queer old handwriting! I'm not sure I can make it out. Let me see—it begins: 'Gray's Inn, y^e^ MDC'—oh, 1611—no, that's in another line—'y^e^ Fourth Day of March, 1611. Goode Master'—dear me, what is this? S-h-a—why, I do believe it is—yes, it is—Shakspere! 'Goode Master Shakspere'! Oh, is n't this interesting?"

She looked up with a brilliant smile. Mr. Haggett was deadly pale. "It has come!" he murmured, with dry lips. "My dream is fulfilled;

my reputation is secure forever! Give it to me; I can read it now. Yes, here is the signature—'Fr. Bacon.' A letter to William Shakespeare from Francis Bacon! Edith, I am the most famous man in the civilized world to-day. Yes, yes, yes! Listen to this:

"'Gray's Inn, ye Fourth Day of March, 1611.

"'Goode Master Shakspere:—My health hath been suche this past Spring, as that I did nigh despaire of compassing ye Work, the whiche is herewith incloased. Briefly, I commend myself to your Love, and that you shall with all proper dilligence make me a fair coppy thereof, after ye same maner as alwaies heretofore. Concerning ye name or title of this present Drama, I doe find myself in some debate; yet methinks that of "Othello" will serve as well as another, albeit "Desdemona" likewise hath a faire sounde. Yet will I declare for ye first. So, with affection for your past services, and desiring you toe be goode to alle concealed Poets, I continue your verie greatful, 'Fr. Bacon.'"

After finishing the letter Throgmorton Haggett folded it gently up again and laid it reverently on the table. "Edith," he said, solemnly, "this is the culminating moment of my existence; it is a turning point in the history of the world. After three centuries, the truth is at last known, and through me! To-morrow all the world will ring with the discovery which is yours and mine alone to-day. That letter is, beyond all comparison, the most

important—the most valuable—document in existence. As you perhaps know, 'Othello,' according to the most trustworthy indications, was written about 1611. Bacon wrote it; Shakespeare copied it 'without blotting a line,' no doubt, as the saying was. Edith, my dearest Edith, let me celebrate this triumph by kissing your lovely hand!"

Edith accepted the caress with infinite grace and complaisance. "But, *mon cher*," she said, "is not this the book that you bought of that old gentleman with the curious name?"

"Christopher Crumblehorne? Yes, that is so. I paid him his full price for it—one hundred dollars."

"You paid him for the book, *mon cher*, but not for the letter! And were you not telling me only yesterday that you had set aside an immense sum of money, ten thousand dollars, for the person who should bring you evidence in support of your theory? Surely this Mr.—what was his name?—has done this; and you are bound to hand him over the bequest. Am I not right?"

She laid her soft hand on his and looked up in his face. Mr. Haggett's features had begun to assume an embarrassed expression, but, under the influence of those glorious eyes, they gradually softened.

"Edith," he cried at last, "Edith, I will do it! But on one condition: one condition, dearest—dearest of women!"

"And what is that?" she asked, sweetly.

"That you consent to—remember, Edith, that I am not only rich as men rate riches, but henceforth the equal in distinction of any potentate on earth. Edith let this hand which I now hold be mine forever! Be my wife! Believe me, that, as Mrs. Throgmorton Haggett, you will be the envy and the glory of your sex, in renown, as you already are in fact! Edith, I might once have been your father; fate denied me that; it is for you to compensate that loss by permitting me to become your husband!"

"Dear Mr. Haggett," she replied, looking him frankly in the face, "I feel your kindness and the great honor you offer me, and you have no doubt observed that I have regarded you with no ordinary interest; and yet I am hardly prepared to settle the whole future course of my life at a moment's notice." She hesitated and looked down.

"Do not refuse me!" urged he. "I will make any arrangements you wish. Half—two-thirds of my fortune shall be yours on my wedding day!"

"It is not your fortune that moves me, *mon cher*. But," she added, again placing her hand in his, "I

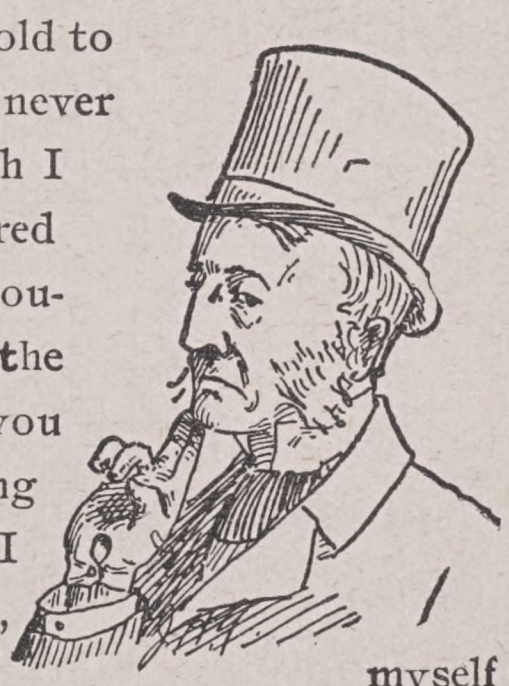
will make a stipulation—call it a woman's whim, or say that I wish to test the nobility of soul that I am morally convinced is yours. Send this money to old Mr.—Mr.—you know whom I mean. He is old and poor; it will enable him to pass the remainder of his days in ease and comfort. Sit down now and write the check for him. Enclose it to him and give me the letter. I am going out to take my morning constitutional with my maid. I will put the letter in the registered mail. And when I come back, *mon cher*,—my dear Throgmorton—it will be to fix the day on which we can be happy!"

There is little left to tell, but that little is not unimportant. The check was written. It cost the writer a pang, but it was done. Edith, with a smile of heavenly promise, put it in her reticule and sallied forth with her maid. She was due to return at lunch. She did not arrive. The afternoon passed. Dinner-time came. Mr. Haggett had passed through the stages of anxiety, alarm, misgiving. He was now in a frenzy of panic. The servant brought in a note. From her!

He tore it open. It is not often that a man has the fate to read, in one and the same day, a letter from Bacon to Shakespeare and such an epistle as

this from Edith to her elderly lover. It ran as follows:

"*Mon cher*, we are gone. By 'we,' I mean my husband, myself, and your ten thousand dollars. My husband is the gentleman known to you as Christopher Crumblehorne. That is not his real name; neither is he so old, by some forty years, as he appeared to be during your interview with him. He is an actor, and has few rivals in his make-up for elderly characters. As for me, I am indeed the Edith whose mother you wronged and left to starve. I have supported myself by my own talents, and I have, with the assistance of my husband, paid off an old score on you. This money I hold to be rightfully mine; my conscience will never reproach me with the manner in which I chose to possess myself of it. You offered me half your fortune. I took ten thousand dollars. We are quits. As to the authorship of Shakespeare, I advise you to consult an expert before announcing your discovery to the world. When I return, I will be yours. Meanwhile, with cordial good wishes, I subscribe myself



"Your obliged EDITH."

It's all clear enough, except as to that dream of Mr. Haggett's, and that has remained a mystery to this day.

* * *

The round-bodied gentleman, having finished his tale, poured out a glass of wine and drank it, with a twinkle in his eye. Sam said:

"That's a very entertaining story, sir, but it strikes me that it disproves the very theory you meant to illustrate by it."

"How so, sir?" demanded the virtuoso, throwing one arm over the back of his chair.

"Because, if it had been so commonplace a thing as you pretend for people to plot to get the better of one another, your story would have appeared commonplace, too; instead of which we all found it quite novel and interesting."

"Why, sir, I never heard a more preposterous argument," exclaimed the virtuoso, pulling up his collar.

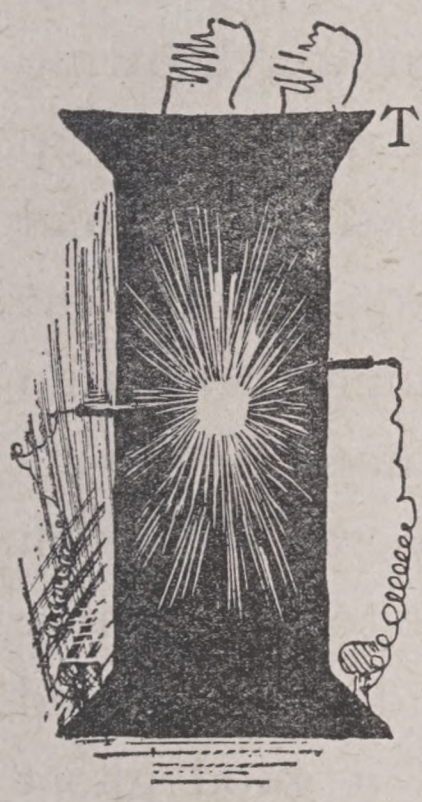
"You have had your say, sir," interrupted Sam, smiling upon him with a peculiar arch expression; "and unless you yield to the chair, I shall further illustrate the emptiness of your theory by telling the company who it was that gave the order to fit out all the newsboys in New York with a new pair of boots."

At this the round-bodied gentleman grew crimson, and, in his confusion, attempted to drink out of the glass that he had just emptied. Meanwhile, Sam turned to a youngish man with short side whiskers, who looked like a well-to-do broker, and was in fact, I believe, an electrical engineer.

"Suppose you give us that incident about your friend Norton," said he.

The youngish man started, and seemed embarrassed; he murmured something about not being accustomed to addressing a general audience; but as Sam showed no symptoms of an inclination to let him off, he cleared his throat nervously, and began in these words:

THE ELECTRICAL ENGINEER'S STORY.



IT was Norton himself who told me the story. Norton, as you know, is a physician and a specialist in nervous and mental diseases. His cast of mind is skeptical, or at least severely logical. I am sure that he would have discredited the thing if anybody had told it to him. Indeed, it is doubtful if he altogether accepts it even as it is. He cannot explain it, and he is accustomed to reject whatever he cannot explain. Nevertheless, since it happened to himself he is in a dilemma. A man in a normal condition of health and mind hesitates to disbelieve the testimony of his own senses.

Hallucinations are, of course, the result of some functional derangement. But when an impossible things happens, what are you to do? Mind, I say when it does happen in your own experience. You are precluded on the one hand, from denying that it did happen; while on the other, an impossibility is always an impossibility.

Norton, I fancy, habitually avoids thinking of the matter at all. He is in an attitude of "suspended judgment." If some discovery, psychological or physiological, were to turn up, throwing light upon the subject, I daresay he would take up the Trafford affair with scientific enthusiasm, and make it the theme of a learned disquisition. But meantime he lets it lie as something there is no use in puzzling over. He gave the narrative to me one evening in the freedom of an intercourse which began when we were boys in college together, more than a quarter of a century ago, and has continued ever since. I am rather fond of a good ghost story, and have told more than one in my time, and Norton has smiled indulgently at them. But nothing that I ever imagined is stranger than this which he experienced. He has the advantage of me, and I take off my hat to him.

You are at liberty to make whatever use you like of the hypnotic theory. Norton was one of the first physicians in New York to take up hypnotic experiments with a view to applying the principle in his practice. He is a first-rate operator; he has hypnotized hundreds of persons. He found the effects good in several kinds of affections, but he seldom employs the treatment now for the reason (as I understand it) that he has never been able to satisfy himself just how, or in what cases it succeeds; and whether it may not be followed by remote consequences more or less undesirable. But at the time of the Trafford episode he was still in the midst of his researches, and she herself was frequently hypnotized by him.

I do not know precisely what her disorder was; at all events, it confined her to her bed; and Norton had little expectation of curing her. She could neither walk nor stand, and she occasionally suffered severe pain. She was, Norton said, a very interesting girl, and it was the greatest pity in the world that she should be a helpless invalid. Her mind was no common one. She had not had much personal experience of the world, for she had been "out" only two or three years when she was taken ill; but during her illness she had speculated

deeply and boldly about life, and about what may follow death.

"She had the most logical brain I ever met with in one of her sex," observed Norton; "and I am not one to underrate women, either. Some of the results at which she arrived were startling, but it was hard to find a flaw in her method of reasoning. One of her ideas was that, assuming the existence of a spirit in man, there is no *à priori* reason why it should not become visible outside of the body, or even after bodily dissolution. On the contrary, it was surprising that this did not occur constantly. The spirit is the mind; why should not the mind disembodied be perceptible to the mind embodied? The physical eye does not see—it is only the medium of sight; and it is only material objects that are visible through that medium. But why may not the real eye act without the intervention of this medium, and take cognizance of things on its own plane of being? I objected that there might be nothing for it to take cognizance of; if embodiment meant anything, it meant that the spirit was not 'on its own plane,' and could not, therefore, be reached by the 'real eye.' She replied that hypnotism indicated that the mind could be temporarily dissociated from the body, and justified

the proposition that a means might exist, or be discovered, to produce this dissociation at one's own pleasure. She added (what is quite true) that we fail to see a great many things because we don't look for them, or expect them. The training of the will in this direction might have results.

She said one thing that was curious; I don't remember having heard it elsewhere. She said that after emerging from the hypnotic trance, she had no knowledge or recollection of what she had done or said, as to her physical manifestations, while the trance lasted. But she did often have a recollection, more or less obscure, of having undergone experiences altogether outside of the physical plane. In other words, the life that animated her body during the trance was something distinct from the metaphysical *ego;* the latter was free, and rambled about, so to speak, on its own hook. She was annoyed that she could recall so little of her *ego*'s excursions; she accounted for it on the hypothesis that, in the normal state, only the physical memory was operative. But she had hopes that by practice, or will, she would finally be able to compel the *ego* to render an account of itself. There was something uncanny about the whole idea; but it had a fascination."

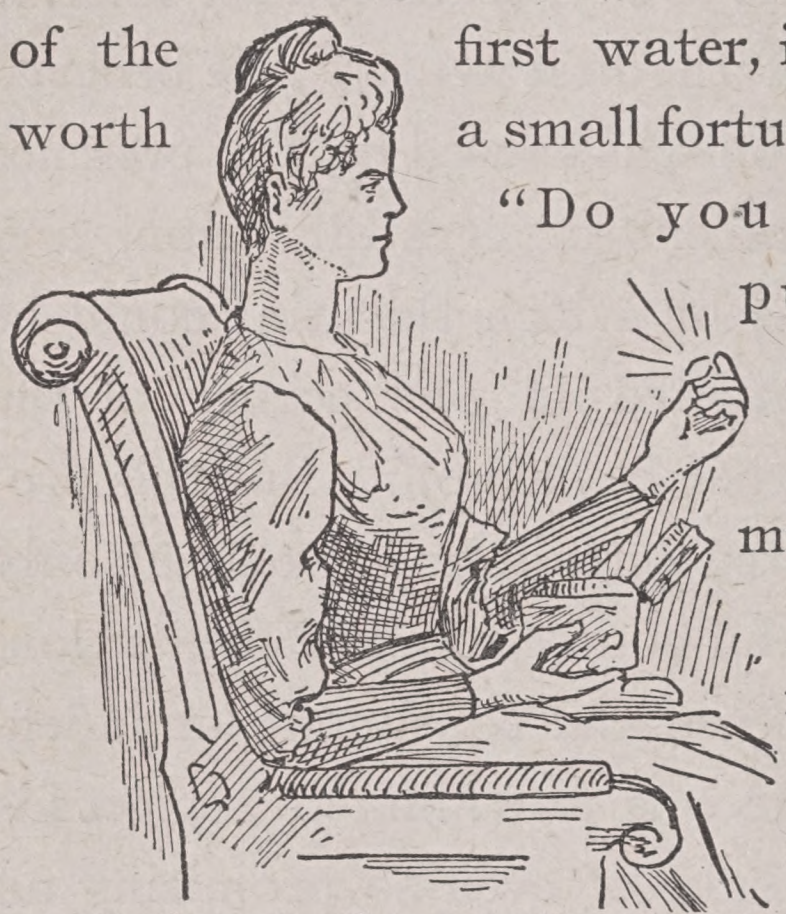
Norton talked about the fascination of her ideas; but I think she exercised over him a warmer fascination than belongs to the intellect alone. In fact he admitted that she was a beautiful woman, and their relations, necessarily intimate, were enlarged and beautified by mutual confidence. She had everything that wealth could give; but the conviction that her health could never be restored must have made her sensible of the irony of fate. She could not well have helped feeling a more than common affection for Norton; as her physician, he was doing for her all that science could do; but he was personally, when he so chose, one of the most winning men I ever knew. He had profound experience of the worth, humor, insight and various charm of talk. He is a bachelor, and, being now forty-five years old, is likely to remain one. But if Sybil Trafford had lived I am disposed to believe that he would have been a married man and happier than he is now.

Norton had a strong bent toward scientific investigation, aside from the direct line of his profession. He studied electricity deeply, and made many improvements in the electrical transmission of messages and sounds, which will come into use when certain existing patent-monopolies have

expired. But the most attractive to the imagination of his ideas was that of freeing diamonds from discoloration—that is to say, transforming inferior stones into gems of the first water. He believed that the discoloration was caused by the presence of iron at the moment of crystallization, and he devised a process by which this tint could be expelled, or concentrated in one corner of the stone, which could then be filed off. But this process could be rendered certain and practical only by a long and careful course of experimentation, involving great expense and consuming an indefinitely long time. He was unwilling to neglect his profession for the sake of even so promising an enterprise as this. Besides, he was interested in the scientific more than in the commercial part of the matter; he had no need of money, and no one was dependent on him. One day, however, a circumstance caused him to reconsider the question.

Sybil Trafford had been made the confidant of the diamond theory, as, I suppose, she was of most of his affairs; and one day, during his visit to her, she had her jewel-box brought in, and showed him a large stone, weighing, in its rough state, some sixty or seventy carats, but which was of a dark yellow hue, and therefore of comparatively slight

value. In other respects it was a fine crystal, and its shape was such that it might be cut as a brilliant without great loss of weight. Had it been of the first water, it would have been worth a small fortune.



"Do you think you could purify that?" she asked him.

"I suppose I might," he said.

"Do, then," she returned, handing it to him; "and when I get well I will wear it as the pendant to my necklace." She smiled as she said it; and he smiled, too, but sadly; for they both knew that it would be far easier to put light into the diamond than to put strength and life into her.

"I wish," he remarked, "that you were a diamond."

"What would you do with me?"

"I would have a ring made and set you in it."

"And what would you do with the ring?"

"Wear it as long as I lived."

"And what then?"

"Be buried with it, I suppose."

"I think it's better as it is," said she, smiling again. "Diamonds have no souls. After you were buried—ages after—some one would come and pick me out of the mold and appropriate me. But I have a soul, and some day or other you and I will meet, and there will be no talk of burying."

Norton took the diamond home with him, and a few days after he subjected it to his process, though without any particular expectation of a successful result. He tried first one proportion and then another, and tested it with various degrees of magnetic force, but neglected to take due note of the steps of his procedure.

In the midst of his work he was called away, and left the stone in position. It was not until the next day that he remembered it. On going to examine it, he found that it had become pure white save for a black spot at one end, not much bigger than the head of a pin. The correctness of his theory was established; but, thanks to his carelessness, he did not know how it had been accomplished, and could not, therefore, reproduce the result. This was annoying; but there, nevertheless, was Sybil's diamond as brilliant and faultless as the Kohinoor itself. He ground away the

black spot, and carried the gem back to his patient the same afternoon.

"I have cured it," said he, "and now you must get well, too."

"How did you do it?" she asked, after admiring the transformation.

"I don't know. Probably that is the only successful attempt I shall ever make."

"No, you ought to find it out," she replied. "If you had invented a way of making diamonds I should not wish you to practice it, for then their preciousness would be destroyed. But it seems only right that sick diamonds should be made well; it is more in the way of your profession, too!"

It so happened that a week or two later Norton was consulted by a man by the name of Scaramanga, who was suffering from insomnia. He was a Hollander, of Spanish or Portuguese descent, and an odd sort of personage. His height was extraordinary, owing to the disproportionate length of his legs, but he was narrow shouldered and reedy of figure, and his head was small enough for a boy of ten. It was adorned, however, with an abundant thatch of coal-back hair; his eyebrows were bushy, his nose prominent, and his

mustache and goatee were as fierce as those of Don Quixote himself.

Mr. Scaramanga was a voluble talker, and it presently transpired that he was learned on the subject of precious stones, and had turned his knowledge to commercial advantage. He was, in fact, by his own account, agent for a large firm of jewelers in Antwerp. He talked in a large and grandiloquent vein, and entertained Norton not a little, for the latter was fond of a highly flavored character, and had a good sense of humor. But at length Scaramanga chanced to say that he had an invention for improving the water of off color stones and then Norton became curious. He asked him how he did it. Scaramanga replied by shaking his head and laying his long forefinger craftily beside his nose.

"It is worth a million dollars a year to know that," quoth he. "Do you wish to buy the secret of me? Well, for ten millions I sell him!"

"Fiddlestick!" exclaimed Norton, with a laugh. "If you have really discovered the process, of course you've patented it, and so might disclose it without fear. But I don't believe you know anything about it. There is only one way of doing the thing, and I have reason to think that no one but myself knows what that is."

"You!" exclaimed the other, changing countenance. "Pardon me, sir, but how shall a doctor know anything about diamonds?"

"Doctors know everything in this country. It is not many days since I turned a sixty-carat brown stone as white as a water-drop in the sunshine."

This led to a conversation, whereby two things were elicited; first, that Scaramanga really had no knowledge of the secret of which he had boasted; and, secondly, that he was consumedly anxious to learn what Norton's process was. But on that point Norton declined to be communicative. Finally Scaramanga made a business proposition. If Norton would agree to perfect his method of treatment, and take out a patent for it,

Scaramanga would bring a certain capitalist and friend of his, Wimbush by name, who would put up any required amount of money. The three would form themselves into a company for the purification of gems, Wimbush and Scaramanga paying all the expenses and doing all the work; while all that would be required of Norton would be to accept fifty-one per cent of the stock, and to draw his receipts therefrom.

This seemed a fair enough offer, and Norton consented to take it under consideration. He was in no need of money; his practice brought him in a large income; but he knew of many ways in which he could apply a great fortune to schemes of value and interest to medicine. Scaramanga brought Wimbush and introduced him; a broad, fat, watchful, taciturn man, who seemed to do a great deal of thinking, and who was anything but demonstrative. The matter was discussed in numerous interviews, and at last a basis of action was agreed upon. Norton was to meet Wimbush and Scaramanga in Washington on a certain date. There, and in their presence, he was to explain and illustrate his method. If it turned out to be what he claimed, he was to receive one hundred

thousand dollars down, and the company would be immediately formed and proceed to business.

On the morning of the day of his departure Norton went to see Sybil Trafford. He had already mentioned to her his two prospective partners, and he now gave her a narrative in detail of what had been done, and of what it was proposed to do.

She listened to it all with her eyes fixed steadily and thoughtfully upon his face.

"Do you trust these men?" she asked, when he had finished.

"I have no high opinion of them, certainly," he answered, smiling. "They are not people I should care to pass my life with. But the arrangements suggested leave them no opening to swindle me. I have the control of the stock and the business, and can vote them out if I choose; I think I've been rather shrewd with them."

"They don't seem to me good men," said Sybil; "and I doubt if good can come from associating with people who are not good. I wish I could see them; then I could tell."

"Well, I'm afraid we can't manage that," returned Norton.

"At what hour do you start?" asked she.

"Eleven-thirty, I believe—the night express."

"And when shall you return?"

"Oh, in three or four days; it will depend somewhat on circumstances."

"I feel as if there were going to be a change," said Sybil, in a low voice.

"What sort of a change? In you, or in me, or in things in general?"

"I can't tell; only—a change. After all, you know, people are not immortal. I'm sure, if it hadn't been for you, I should have undergone a change long since."

"Come, you mustn't talk like that, you know," said Norton, looking at her more searchingly. "Have you been having more pain? Any new symptoms?"

"No pain at all; on the contrary, I feel well—as if I had no body. I feel able to do anything; though I know that I can only lie here. I am all thought and will."

"Well, thought and will cover a good deal. You must use your will to make yourself well, and your thoughts—to think of me sometimes."

"The last thing I shall think of will be you!" returned she, smiling; "and you can take that either way you choose. Goodby, now; we shall meet again."

"Indeed we shall!" said Norton; and so they parted.

No sooner had he left her than Norton came to a determination, namely, that at their next meeting he would ask her to be his wife. He wondered why he had not done it before. Had he not loved her for a long while past? Undoubtedly he had; and yet he had never said as much, even to himself, until now. The conviction must have been present in his heart long ago; but for some reason it had only just emerged into full consciousness. He loved her, and would ask her to marry him. He was convinced that she loved him. He could not have specified any act or word of hers to substantiate this belief, but he had it nevertheless. It was new to him, and yet somehow familiar. It was as if some power or influence had all at once been applied to his soul, raising a curtain there which revealed a state of feeling long existing but only now recognized. Such sudden and unexplained awakenings come to all of us; and we know as little as Norton did wherefore.

Though his resolve was, from a practical and rational standpoint, anything but defensible, inasmuch as it was almost a physiological certainty that Sybil could not live long, and would never leave

her bed, still it brought Norton singular peace and happiness of mind. His eyes brightened and his step became elastic. He felt like a bridegroom going to his wedding. His thoughts dwelt entirely on Sybil, and she appeared, not as the invalid he had always known, but as the lovely and animated girl she had been before they met. This was an odd freak of fancy, but its oddness did not strike Norton at the time. On the contrary, it seemed to him that he had never before been so reasonably and soundly himself as he was now.

Considering that he was about to start on a journey the results of which were likely to have an important bearing on his whole future career, he might have been expected to think a good deal about the probable outcome and conduct thereof; yet this matter, as far as he could afterward recollect, never invaded his mind at all; he neither could nor desired to detach his meditations from Sybil. In those meditations he passed the afternoon; he was absurdly happy. After dinner, as his train did not start till toward midnight, he walked out for a stroll. He turned up Broadway and walked on until he reached Thirty-ninth street. As his eyes rested upon the big yellow mass of the Metropolitan opera house, he all at once dis-

covered that he wished to go in there and listen to the performance.

He had not been to the opera for at least a dozen years; but this desire did not seem at all strange to him, nor did it admit of an instant's doubt or hesitation. He bought a ticket at the box office and went in. The opera was "Lucia di Lammermoor," with Patti in the title-role. The first act was nearly over as Norton took his seat in the parquet on the right. The house was overflowing with a fashionable audience. Glancing around the array of boxes, Norton saw that only one was unoccupied; it was on the first tier, two or three removes from the stage.

The act ended, and a buzz of conversation arose over the great assemblage, a fluttering of fans, a rustle of programs, a leveling of opera-glasses and lorgnettes. Norton sat quietly in a state of sensation calmly delightful. All was well with him; he had no anxieties, no doubts, no troubles on his horizon. Some great, unformulated happiness seemed near him or around him. He did not attempt to analyze or explain it, but gave himself up passively to its enjoyment.

As the curtain rose on the second act Norton's eyes happened to be fixed on the curtains at the

back of the vacant box near the stage; and he saw a white hand with rings sparkling on the fingers grasp the border of the curtain and draw it aside. A young woman emerged, and, advancing to the front of the box, seated herself in one of the chairs. She was in full evening costume, the general effect of which was white. Her hair, which was very dark, was coiled on the top of her head, revealing the beautiful lines on the nape of her neck. From the base of her white and full throat the shoulders sloped with a slightly convex curve to the edging of her corsage; her features were noble and lovely; her brilliant eyes and delicately tinted complexion showed the perfection of physical health and vigor. Round her neck was fastened a circlet of diamonds with a single immense diamond as a pendant. This splendid stone blazed and sparkled like a star, and seemed to shed a radiance rather than to reflect it.

After settling herself in her chair, this beautiful woman took up a small operaglass and began to glance over the house. Presently she directed the instrument straight at Norton. She immediately lowered it, and bent forward toward him with a bow and a smile. She had recognized him; a moment later with a gesture almost imperceptible she beckoned him to come to her.

Norton rose on the instant. Patti was in the midst of an aria, and the audience, entranced to hear, turned resentfully on Norton as he left his seat and walked up the aisle. Little cared he for that. He gained the lobby, mounted the steps, and hastened along the corridor to the door of the box. There he paused a moment. "It is not possible!" he murmured to himself. "I must have been mistaken. It cannot be she!"

Nevertheless, he opened the door, and found himself in the ante-chamber. As he stood there, undecided whether to go on or to retreat, the curtains parted, and he saw the outlines of her figure dark against the bright background beyond. He stepped forward with an exclamation of joy, and grasped in his own the soft white hands that she held out to him.

"Sybil!" he exclaimed; "is this really you?"

"It is really I, Paul; who else should it be?"

"But when I left you this morning, you were—"

"This morning is not to-night. I am an invalid no longer. Don't I look well? I came here to see you. Do you know why?"

He looked in her eyes, and saw there all that his heart wanted to see. He could not repress the words that rose to his lips.

"Sybil, do you love me?"

"With all my soul! with all my soul!" she answered. He drew her inward through the curtains, and held her in his arms.

They sat down and talked together. What they said was sacred. The words that lovers say are unimportant, but they convey meanings that transcend all language. They were in heaven. All glorious and lovely influences were about them, and time stood still.

"How do you like my diamond, Paul—your diamond?"

"Is that the one I doctored? It seems too splendid!"

"What you did for the diamond is only the symbol of what you have done for me. They are miracles—never to be repeated!"

"Never, my darling!"

"Take me home, now. I will not say good-by to you here. Then we must part for a little while —but not forever, remember! Come!"

He wrapped her cloak round her shoulders, she put her arm in his, and they passed out to a carriage that was awaiting them. When they reached her house, she bade him enter. He followed her as she went rustling up the stairs, leaving behind her an exquisite perfume as of celestial flowers. At the door of her room she turned and smiled at him.

A sudden misgiving seized him. He stepped hastily after her across the threshold. There, on the bed, lay the form of Sybil Trafford, white and lifeless; beside her stood the members of the family, their faces wet with tears. But as Norton advanced to the bedside, Sybil opened her eyes. For a moment, through the shadow of death, there gleamed the smile and the beauty of the spirit he had communed with. She raised her hand, and laid her finger on the great diamond that sparkled on her bosom. Norton stooped and kissed her lips. When he raised his head she was gone. But he knew that she had been aware of their meeting, and that they would meet again.

"That's all," said Norton, tossing his dead cigar into the fireplace, and folding his arms.

"It seems cruel—and yet, I don't know!" said I.

"It was the blessing of my life," returned he. "I don't understand it. I can't explain it. I won't even say that I believe it; but it was that."

"And what about the diamond scheme?" asked I, after a while.

Norton shook his head. "Nothing. Those fellows turned out swindlers; if I had gone to them, I should probably never have been heard of again. They meant to steal my process and then put me out of the way."

"Then that gives a motive for Sybil's apparition."

"Oh, it was not that!" he exclaimed, almost indignantly. "It was to tell me something of infinitely greater moment. What is life? But she brought me—something better!"

* * *

This story seemed to impress some of the company, and I fancied I noticed a look of thoughtful sympathy in the eyes of my friend Captain Keppel, who had recently arrived in this country from a sojourn of some years in the East. As I knew the

captain to be a fascinating narrator, I took advantage of my position next to Sam to whisper a suggestion to him; to which he responded by an imperceptible nod.

It may be as well to say here that the captain looks to be about fifty years old, though, for aught I know, he may be twice that age. There is no country that he has not visited, and there is hardly a man or woman of eminence or notoriety of the present century of whom he has not some personal anecdote to tell. He was born at sea, in the neighborhood of Cape Horn; his mother was a Spaniard, his father an Englishman who had spent most of his life in America. His own childish years were passed in Ceylon; he was educated partly in Vienna and Paris, and partly at Oxford. By dint of interest in high quarters, he obtained a lieutenancy in the English army, and was not long afterward promoted for gallantry in the field. But the conditions of army life appear not to have suited him; and having at a very early age attained the rank of captain, he resigned in the face of the most flattering prospects, and began those independent rambles about the world which have ever since continued. When in the mood, no man can talk more delightfully than he, though he is habitually

reticent concerning dates and localities. The captain is organically related, so to say, to all national upheavals and convulsions; an instinct for which he himself cannot account seems to draw him to the center of interest at the critical moment. He was present at the surrender of Sebastopol—to mention an event that fell within my own boyish recollections. He heard the guns of Sadowa; he stood on the fatal field of Sedan; he leaned at the door of the little hut at Plevna, when Osman Pasha, wounded and beaten, gave up his sword to young Skobeloff. He saw Alexander II. blown to pieces by the bombs of the Nihilists; he saw O'Donavan, of Merb, meet his death at the hands of El Mahdi; and he is one of the few who still believe that Chinese Gordon yet lives, and will return to tell Europe a stranger tale of adventure than any it has heretofore listened to. There is reason to believe, too, that he was with Walker at Nicaragua; and it is known that he rode at Garibaldi's side in his last campaign. But the captain is the quietest of men; he wears no ribbon in his button-hole, nor is there any trace of bombast in his talk or manner. So simple and unstudied are the words of his narratives that you are conscious not of them, but only of the event which they por-

tray. He is a spare, soldierly, sinewy figure of middle height, with a grave, resolute face, gray moustache, with scanty hair curling over a well formed head; at this moment he held a cigar in one brown, sinewy hand, while the other played with the tiny Indian idol at his watch chain. He was saying, in that deep, low, leisurely voice of his, that it would be money in the pocket of the owner of the Braganza diamond if Dr. Norton would try his skill on that.

"Have you ever seen it?" I asked.

The captain nodded.

"Some persons say," remarked Sam, "that it is not a diamond at all; certainly not of the first water."

"When I was in Rio, a good many years ago," said the captain, "the then young Dom Pedro showed me the stone, and I held it in my hand. I could just make my fingers meet around it. It is not, of course, so brilliant as the Kohinoor; it is not cut as that is; and it certainly has a slight yellowish tinge. Nevertheless, as you know, it has been valued at $15,000,000 American money, and we may say that nowhere else is so great value compressed into so small space. The ransom of a kingdom within the grasp of a schoolboy's fist.

But there is significance in the legends attached to most of these great jewels—that they are inhabited by a demon, which works calamity to whomsoever becomes possessed of it. There is something destructive, maddening, phantasmal about them; they promise infinite wealth, and they bring only misery and death. They diminish, instead of adding to the riches and prosperity of the world. Their history is a history of robbery, oppression, and murder. The devil is in 'em," he added, taking a puff at his cigar. After a pause, continued:

"But the devil doesn't get into them except by our introduction. The Braganza lay in the earth a myriad of centuries, unknown and untouched, a mere harmless, glittering lump of crystallized carbon. If mankind would but pass a law that such gems bear no money value, and are to be used only as religious emblems, the demon would be exorcised, and we would all be the happier."

"You seem to be particularly interested in the Braganza," said I. "Is there any legend attached to it?"

"There is a strange story connected with it, which I heard, a good while ago, from the chief

actor in the drama. Do you know the circumstances of the stone's discovery?"

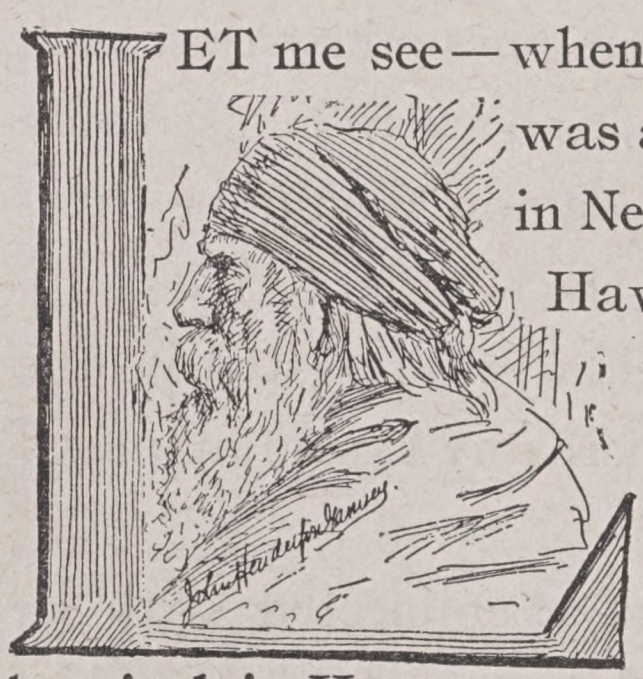
"It's a South American gem, isn't it?"

"Yes; it originally belonged to the Emperor of Brazil, and was given by him to the King of Portugal. Well, I doubt whether any one now living, except myself, knows the full history of the matter. I have met with few instances of the irony of fate more remarkable; as the tale is not very long, perhaps it would not bore you to hear it."

"I was just about to ask you to tell it to us, captain," said Sam.

The captain laid down his cigar, folded his arms, and after a few moments' recollection began:

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.



LET me see—when was it? Never mind; it was a long time back. I was in New Orleans, on my way to Havana, where I meant to take ship to Vera Cruz, and so to the City of Mexico. There was a delay in getting off,—yellow jack in Havana, or something,—at all events I was obliged to spend some ten days in the Cres-

cent City. One day, an old, white-headed beggar came up on crutches to the veranda of the hotel at which I was stopping, and asked for alms. He had a look of having seen vicissitudes. I took a fancy to him, and put a gold eagle in his hand.

"You seldom get hold of such a fortune as that," said I.

"Senor," he replied, speaking with a Spanish accent, but correctly enough, "I have held in this hand what would buy this whole city, and put a new city in its place."

"You have been improvident, it appears," said I.

"My improvidence, senor, was before that time —not after."

"Unfortunate, eh?"

"The most unfortunate, senor, of God's creatures."

"Miraculously so," added I; "for it is no less than a miracle that a man should be able to lose as much money as that."

"It was taken from me," said he.

"But you resisted?"

"No, senor."

"Who was the thief?"

"It is a question that I have often asked myself, senor. I have sometimes said that it was one man,

sometimes another; at times I have accused myself. But, at the last, I think it was none of these; it was—Fate."

"That may be said of all misfortunes; you are a philosopher; but most men would not give up such a fortune, even to Fate, without a struggle. Anyhow, Fate can't have spent the money."

The fellow shrugged his shoulders. I saw that there was a mystery somewhere, so I made him come up to my room, and put a bottle of wine on the table between us. There and then he told me the story of his life. Here it is:

His name was John Cordoba. He was born at Monterey, his father being a respectable man, and well off, as times went; his mother was the handsomest woman in the town. Juan remarked that he resembled her in his youth; and possibly he did. The inhabitants were under the dominion of the priests, who practically owned everything, and lived in a big adobe mission building, the ruins of which I have seen. When the California gold-fever began many emigrants passed through Monterey, and left a good deal of money behind them there; but this was long before that period. Juan lived in an adobe house, built round a court, verandaed, stuccoed and white washed. There was no school-

ing in those days, and Juan played about wherever fancy led him; his mother idolized him; he was the only son, and all went his way.

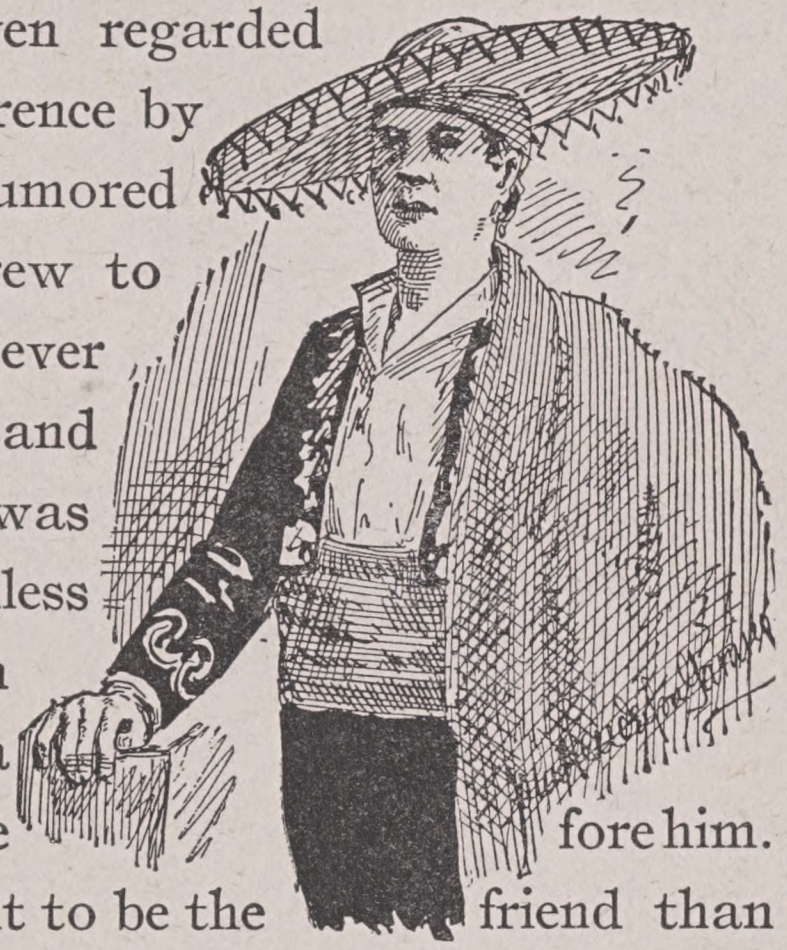
This mother of his was a very superstitious woman—a believer in omens, witchcraft, and magic white and black. She was not herself an adept, but there was an old Indian wizard whose acquaintance she cultivated, and whose advice she followed. Had she been a New Englander, she might have worked off this imaginative tendency by writing romantic stories for the magazines, or in lecturing on Women's Rights. As it was, she had to wreak herself on mysticism; and perhaps that way is as harmless as any. But it turned out badly for poor Juan. At the time of his birth, she had the old Indian hag cast his horoscope, and caused it to be engraved on a gold disc, about the size of your hand; and for many years Juan wore it suspended to his neck by chain; in fact he kept it until he lost everything. If any horoscope ever deserved to be preserved, certainly this did; it was a truly remarkable affair.

Are you familiar with the technical terms of astrology? If not, I won't trouble you with such details as what planet was Lord of Life, what signs were hostile and what favorable, and how

they were posted. Juan drew it all out for me on the fly leaf of an old testament that happened to be lying on the mantelpiece; it must be confessed that it had an alluring look to it—quite enough to ensnare a sounder judgment than his. There were a number of minor indications, good and bad; but the great point, overruling and dwarfing all the rest, was to the effect that the "native," on a certain date between his twenty-second and twenty-third years, was to become possessed of greater wealth than belonged to any living man, and that he should acquire this all in one day.

There was no mistaking the signs; if any reliance was to be placed in astrology, then the truth of this prediction was beyond question. Needless to say that Juan's mother believed it, and that she brought up Juan in the faith. He was given to know that he was to be the greatest capitalist of the century soon after he came of age. He inherited his mother's imaginative temperament, combined with a strong mingling of Mexican indolence; and it is not to be wondered at that his splendid expectations disinclined him to work his way through the world. All the nearly boundless power that wealth can give was to be his. His father died while Juan was a child, and thus the

only restraining influence over the boy was removed. He became the little autocrat of his own home, and was even regarded with a sort of reverence by others. People humored him, and as he grew to manhood, he waxed ever more overbearing and headstrong. He was the handsome, reckless ungovernable Juan Cordoba, with a dazzling future before him. It was more prudent to be the friend than the enemy of a man like that. Out of his countless millions he might enrich every man, woman and child in Monterey, and never feel the difference.



Meanwhile he felt safe in spending freely whatever money he could lay hands on. There was no Jew money-lender in Monterey, and even had there been, he might have hesitated to accept Juan's security; but his mother gave him all she had. Why should she refuse him? In a few years it would all return to her a millionfold, and it was well that the boy should acquire the habit of dispensing riches. So Juan cut a fine figure, wearing

the finest clothes that money could buy, and trying his best to behave as if the hour of destiny had already struck. One can imagine it must have been an agreeable life; spending all there was in hand, and trusting in the stars to reimburse him without limit hereafter. Like Julius Cæsar and Napoleon Bonaparte, he regarded himself as superior to the rest of men—as the favorite of the gods. Whatever he attempted must succeed; whatever he did must be right. For a long while results seemed to confirm his assumption. He had the best of good luck. Where others would have met disaster, he emerged scathless.

So handsome and conspicuous a youth was sure to have plenty of love affairs, and Juan might have married the best match on the coast had he chosen; but he was not at this period a marrying man. He meant to wed an empress one of these days, and was not going to throw himself away on a Mexican senorita. At the same time, he was no ascetic, and the consequences were as might have been expected. He lived in a tangle of intrigues, and since discretion was never the leading trait of his character, it was a constant marvel that he escaped getting a knife between his ribs. To judge by his own account, the women knew

not how to resist him; and on the other hand, the women's natural protectors were never on hand at the right moment.

One young lady, Maria Torres by name, made a particular impression on Juan. She lived near San Jose. Her father, an alcalde, was not ignorant of Juan's reputation, and prevented him from having access to her. She was betrothed to her cousin Gonzales. Stimulated by opposition, Juan finally succeeded in getting some private conversation with Maria, and promised her marriage. At all events, he so dazzled and misled her, that she consented to an elopement. The distance from San Jose to Monterey is about fifty miles. Juan rode thither one night, rested the next day, and on the following night awaited Maria at a place previously agreed on with two horses. It was his plan to ride with her to Santa Cruz, take a vessel there and escape to one of the islands off Santa Barbara.

He had at this juncture nearly completed his twenty-first year and was looking forward with impatience to the accomplishment of the prophecy. In truth, he had nearly got to the end of his tether. All the property his father had left was spent; house and lands were mortgaged to their full

value; and many debts had been incurred. Unless destiny soon appeared, he was likely to have trouble. But he had no misgivings. On the contrary, as he waited at the trysting-place, he had never felt more assured that all was going well.

Maria came at last and received an ardent welcome. But before Juan could lift her into the saddle, two men, who were anything but welcome, joined the party. They were the alcalde and Manuel Gonzales. The former rode at Juan, who was still on foot, with his pistol leveled. It was life or death. Juan snatched his own pistol and fired; the alcalde fell. Manuel sprang from his horse and rushed on Juan with his knife. The next moment, Manuel was on the ground with his own knife buried in his heart. It was all over in a couple of minutes. The noise had attracted some people in the neighborhood, and Juan had no time to lose. It was useless to think of Maria; she was on her knees beside her father; he drove in his spurs and was off. Toward morning he reached the coast, boarded his vessel, and made sail. Such was the end of his last love affair.

During the voyage, he had ample leisure to review his position. He was ruined in purse and person; for his horoscope could not have availed

to save his life. Even in Mexico, it is not a convenient thing to murder alcaldes; though, to be sure, as he learned years afterward, the old gentleman was only wounded, and survived for many years. But Manuel was dead, and Juan was known to be his slayer. He could never venture back to his own home, for it would add a bitterness to death were he to suffer it after having got his millions. Juan, however, did not dread homesickness. When his destiny was accomplished, he could send for his mother, change his name, and live in splendor where he chose. The recent catastrophe had not in the least weakened Juan's faith in his golden future. The adventure might have turned out worse. He had escaped without a scratch, and though he could not have Maria, neither could Gonzales. There were other Marias, not to speak of empresses. It was not Juan's cue to repent; life was before him, and he felt qualified to enjoy it. The great change could not now be far distant. Meanwhile, except the clothes he wore and a hundred dollars in his belt, he had nothing. He lay on the deck, wondering in what form and by what means his fortune was to come to him. Was he to find the philosopher's stone? Was he to stumble on a gold mine? It was a curious fact,

he told me, that in none of his speculations did the thought of diamonds come to him.

After a week at sea, they were still forty miles north of the Santa Barbara islands. It now fell dead calm, and they lay rolling and creaking on a long swell for four and twenty hours. Then, in a moment, as it seemed, a hurricane from the north-east struck them. They drove staggering to the south-west for a night and a day; the wind then moderated, but soon began again from the north-west. The vessel was in a sinking condition, and the boats had been swept away; the crew set to work to make a raft. Juan looked on but made no offer to help. So persuaded was he of his charmed life that at no time during the storm had he felt uneasy as to his ultimate safety. When the raft was finished, it was found to be barely large enough to accommodate the crew; and the captain told Juan that, since he had not seen fit to help them, he might now help himself. The men got aboard, hoisted a sail, and drifted away, leaving Juan to sink with the ship. When morning broke, the raft was out of sight, but the ship was still afloat. About noon, a barque hove in sight, bore down on him, and took on board the man of destiny, little the worse for his adventure. The

raft was never again heard of; the ship sank within an hour after Juan left her. He felt more than ever convinced that his long awaited glory was at hand.

The barque that had rescued him was bound for the Isthmus, and in the course of a few days he was landed there. While his money held out, he lived at his ease, making no provisions against possible impecuniosity in the future; meanwhile he made the acquaintance of some persons who seemed as aimless as himself; but by the time his last dollar was gone, he had got an inkling as to what their trade might be. They were in fact highwaymen, and they did business on the road across the Isthmus by which the emigrants traveled. The opportunities for escape and concealment which this locality offered were excellent, and the returns too rich to be despised by even so important a personage as Senor Juan Cordoba. The question of morality did not much disturb him; he was already an outlaw. In short, this romantic vagabond became a brigand; and since he was of a masterful and daring disposition, he was presently elected captain of the band, which now became a terror to the country. In these agreeable pursuits Captain Juan whiled away a year or more; and

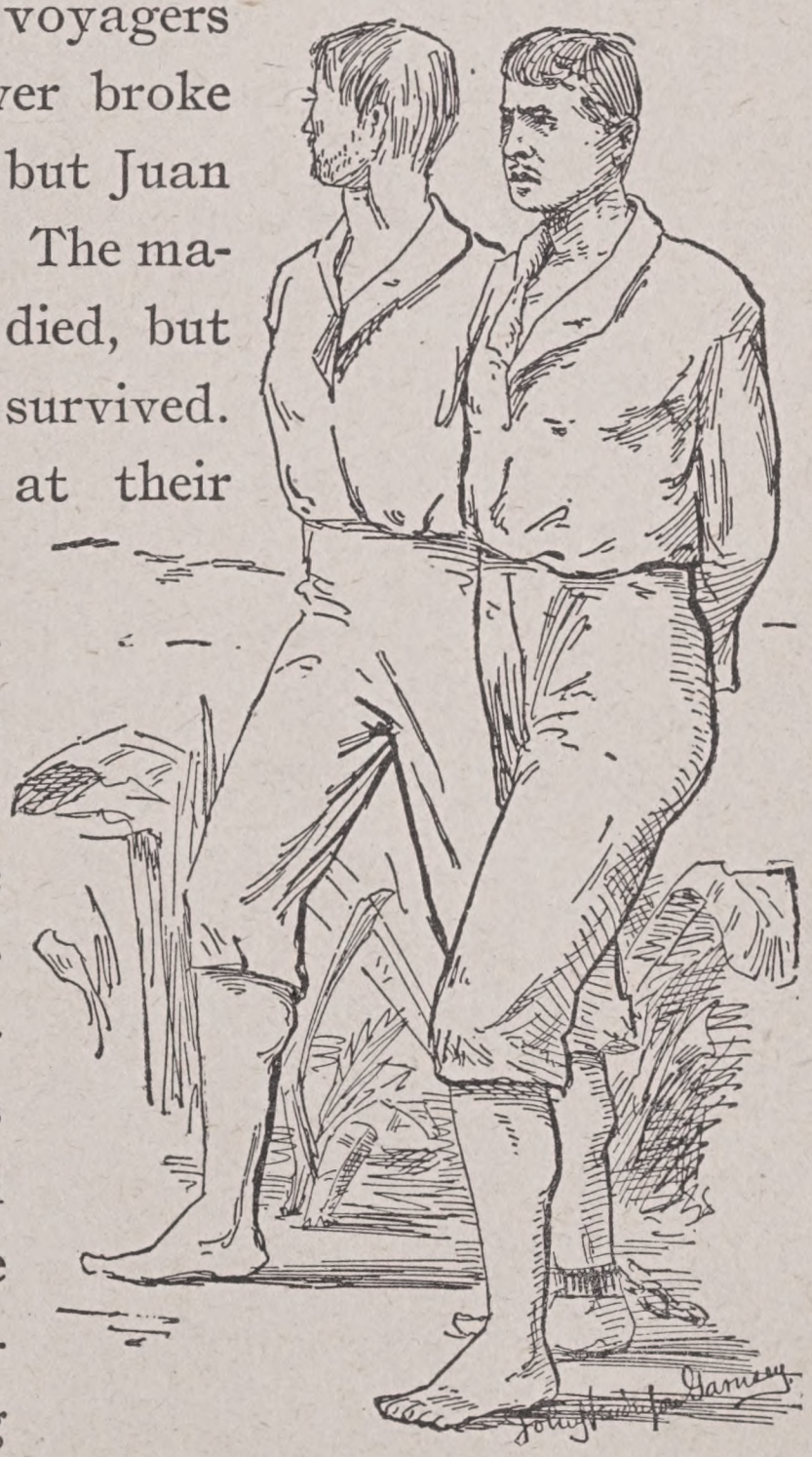
the day was not far off when the prophecy of the horoscope must fall due.

The brigands, in the intervals of their raids, were in the habit of assuming a law-abiding guise, and amusing themselves in one or other of the coast settlements. Here, as luck would have it, Juan ran across a gentleman whose worldly goods he had appropriated a few days previous, and who recognized him on the spot. He was arrested, and finding that denials were unavailing, he not only made a clean breast of it as regarded himself, but also revealed the names of his associates. The latter were promptly hanged, but Juan, out of recognition for his assistance, was put in a striped suit, his hair cropped short, his shoulder branded with a hot iron, and he was given a life-job as a government convict. But his life was spared.

While there's life, there's hope; and Juan did not lose courage. He thought he could easily contrive an escape; either an earthquake would swallow up his keepers, or an angel would descend from heaven and loose his fetters, or some expedient for getting rid of them would present itself. In the meantime he maintained cheerful and friendly relations with his guards, and they permitted him to wear his amulet beneath his striped jacket—for as

an amulet he regarded the gold horoscope which contained the assurance that his misfortunes must soon cease. One day, however, he and some of his companions were put on board a vessel bound to the harbor of Rio Janeiro.

The heat was intolerable, and the sufferings of the involuntary voyagers were great. Fever broke out among them; but Juan was not attacked. The majority of the sick died, but the man of destiny survived. Having arrived at their port, they were taken ashore, divided into parties, and marched into the interior. The Brazilian government, needing labor on the roads of the country, had contracted for the labor of the convicts. Having reached their destination, they were each morning



chained leg to leg, driven to the scene of operations, and kept at work there till sundown. It was killing toil; but Juan, wiry and vigorous, was supported by the conviction that the day of his deliverance was at hand. This secret belief so animated him, that he obtained the favor of his employers, and was promoted to the post of deputy overseer. He was freed from the chain that bound him to his mate, and was occasionally allowed to lay down his own pick and shovel, and direct the work of the others. So time went on, and though he lost the count of days, he was able to say to himself every morning, "perhaps it will be to-day;" and every evening, "perhaps to-morrow." And he smiled privately to himself to think how surprised his keepers would be.

The severest labor was the cutting down of the tropical vegetation which often crossed the line of the road. But much of the country was a level plain, with rocks jutting up out of it, moulded in fantastic forms; again, there were stretches of ferruginous gravel; and sometimes broad marsh-lands in the midst of the savanna, carpeted with grass whose bright green hue contrasted pleasantly with the brown herbage of the plains. Though the heat was great, hunger was almost as sharp as thirst,

and there was no solid food to be had except beef, which must be eaten as soon as killed, or else salted. The pulp-covered nuts of the Bacaba palm were more agreeable to the palate; and a drink was made of the red berries of the Guarana, dried to powder and mixed with water. Air and earth were full of insects, and overhead hovered the great urubus, looking for carrion. The beauty of flowers was everywhere; each day's sun set in a blaze of splendor, and in the mornings the low banks of cloud were tinged with ethereal rose-color; but the existence led by the convicts was a constant torture, which no fairness of nature could alleviate.

At times, in the midst of the day's toil, a deep stillness would settle down, and soon black clouds would collect on the horizon, and move to the zenith. Then lightning and thunder would flash and explode in the black vault, and the rain would fall in broad masses, hissing on the hot face of the earth. During these fierce paroxysms of storm all work was suspended, and the men sought what shelter they could find. During one of these storms, Juan took advantage of the cover afforded by a mushroom shaped rock at the roadside. Two of the other convicts squatted beside him. The

steady roar of the deluge, the detonations and the flashes, produced a sort of numbness of the senses. The streams of water careering down the slopes wore deep channels in the soil; and as Juan stood vacantly gazing at these ruts his eye was caught by the shining of a large crystal. It had been laid bare by the little torrent; and after a while, fearing lest it should be covered up again, Juan issued from his shelter and picked it up.

As he grasped it in his hand, an explosion as of cannon fired into his ear stunned him, and at the same moment he was enveloped in a blinding glare that hurled him to the ground and seemed to dry up all the juices of his body. He became senseless. On coming to himself, he saw that the storm was over; but beneath the ledge of the rock lay the blackened bodies of his two companions, dead and rigid. The right leg of his own trousers was scorched below the knee, and the limb twisted; the links of the chain that fettered his ankles were fused, and the chain no longer bound him; but the thunderbolt had laid fetters upon him that could never be loosened; he was a cripple for life.

He still clutched in his hand the piece of shining crystal which had saved his life and mocked him by severing his chains. Could his limbs have

served him, he might have escaped then and there in the dense jungle that extended close to the road. But he sat helpless, with the great crystal, larger than a hen's egg, sparkling in his hand. Presently the two overseers who had the party in charge, and who had been stunned but not injured by the shock, came up to him. Finding that he could not stand, they decided to return to the camp, about two miles off, and bring an ox-cart on which to transport him, and the bodies of his late companions.

"Remember not to run away," said one, waggishly; "exertion in this weather is unhealthy."

"What has our gentleman got in his hand?" said the other. "It sparkles well."

"I picked it out of the mud," said Juan, indifferently, letting the man take it.

"Only a bit of melted glass," said the first speaker.

"Melted glass doesn't grow hereabouts," returned his companion. "That's a bit of crystal, and not a bad bit, either. I've seen worse sold for a dollar. I shall take it back to camp, and show it to the engineer."

"Very well; only, whatever we get for it, we go

shares, *amigo*," was the reply. "Ah, if it were only a diamond, now."

"Holy Virgin! A diamond! You and I would then buy Brazil, and use it for a cattle-ranch." They walked away laughing.

Juan had sat during their conversation in a mood of gloomy abstraction, and he so remained after they were gone. For the first time in his life, he felt unhopeful. It was not only that he was maimed; he had a sense of having lost something more than bodily vigor. What was it?

"Holy Virgin! A diamond!" Who had said that? Had he said it himself? A diamond; what diamond? "Holy Virgin! A diamond!" What had put that into his head? Stay; were not diamonds sometimes found in Brazil? Diamonds are a kind of crystal; that stone that he had found was a crystal. Suddenly Juan sat erect and stretched out his clenched hands before him, while his face grew crimson. It was too terrible to be believed. It was impossible; and yet—to-day must be the very day foretold by the horoscope. It must be so, because to-morrow was Sunday, and the fatal day was the Saturday before his birthday, which he knew was next week.

But a diamond nearly as large as a man's fist! Who ever heard of such a thing? Aye, but who ever heard of such a fortune as had been promised him? And it had come to him, a cripple and a convict! A convict who had no rights—who could own nothing. "Holy Virgin! A diamond!" A diamond indeed! Such a diamond as would buy a nation. Yes, he had found and had held in his hand the chief diamond of the world, and had given it away without a thought. And so had the prophecy been fulfilled—so had Providence, in which he had never lost faith, kept faith with him.

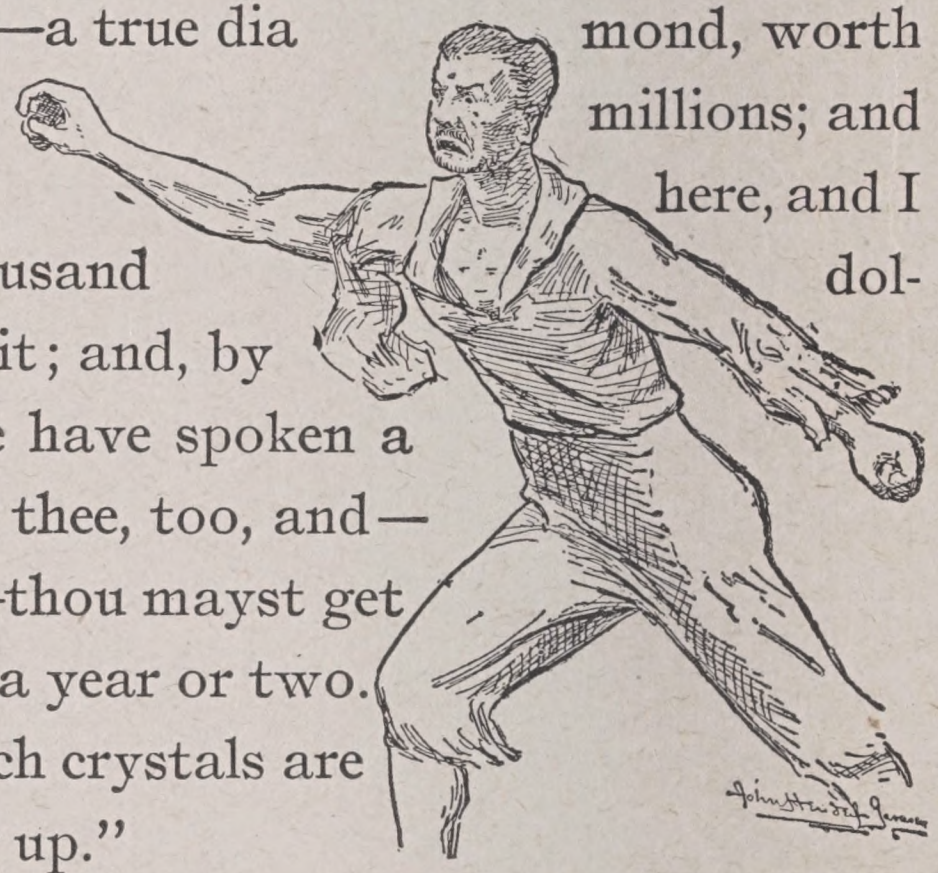
He shrieked; he raved; he shouted to the blackened corpses, on which the urubus were already beginning to settle; he rolled on the earth, and beat his head in frenzy against the stones. A cripple and a convict, and to have found the greatest diamond in the world! He again became insensible, and the urubus hopped beside him, with heads sidewise, and hungry beaks.

He opened his eyes; someone was shaking him by the shoulder. It was the man to whom he had given the diamond.

"Heh, *amigo*, have you found any more of those bits of glass?"

"Give me back my crystal," said Juan, in a whisper.

"Ha, ha,—his crystal! Come, do you know what sort of a crystal that was of yours? Why, it's a diamond—a true dia mond, worth hundreds of millions; and my friend, here, and I shall get a thousand dollars apiece for it; and, by the Virgin, we have spoken a good word for thee, too, and—who knows?—thou mayst get thy pardon in a year or two. Carrambo! such crystals are worth picking up."



"My life—my diamond!" muttered Juan, and fell forward on his face.

When a man has lived wholly under the dominion of a fixed idea, and something happens to deprive him of it, his life, in a sense, comes to an end. Two men could not differ from each other more than did the Juan who had been before the finding of the diamond, from the thunder-smitten wretch who crept about Rio a year later, pardoned by the emperor. For a long time his mind was affected. At last, one day, he found himself in

Panama, without knowing how he got there, and thence, in the course of years, he made his way as far north as Los Angeles. There, driving in a carriage, with a Spanish officer—evidently her husband—by her side, he saw a beautiful woman whom he recognized, though she did not recognize him; she tossed him a bit of silver, with a glance of pity and slight aversion. He flung it back to her with a snarl of rage; it was the first touch of emotion, good or bad, that he had felt since he lost the diamond.

He finally came to New Orleans, and had remained there ever since. When I met him, he was a very old man. By the time he had finished his story, the bottle of wine was finished too. I thanked him for the entertainment he had given me, and he, saluting me with a certain dignity, hobbled out of the room. I went to the window, and looked out. There was a rattle of wheels and a shouting in the street, and I saw a carriage drawn by two horses that were running away. Juan Cordoba was at that moment crossing the street on his crutches. The carriage whirled by in an instant; and there, on the pavement, lay the finder of the Braganza diamond. They brought him to the veranda of the hotel; but when I

reached him, I saw that the poor fellow had gone where diamonds have no value.

* * *

The captain picked up his cigar and relighted it; the rest of us sat silent for a minute at least. Then Sam, without making any comment, addressed the individual on his left hand, who, owing to his position, was the only person at table whom I had not been able to see.

"If I'm not mistaken," said Sam, "you've been abroad, too. Would you mind telling us about something entertaining over there?

Whereupon, the person in question opened his mouth and discoursed to the following effect:

THE UNSEEN MAN'S STORY.

THE friends whom I expected to meet in Athens had been gone two days when I arrived. This was the first of October. I spent three weeks exploring the Grecian capital and its environs, and then I ran across my old college mate, Haymaker, one of the most useful men living, for

he knows everyone and everything, has been everywhere, and is as full of enthusiasm and energy as on the day he entered the freshman class.

He asked me whether I had been to Egypt. I said that I had not. "Then now is your time!" was his reply; and taking out a notebook, he proceeded to jot down for me an itinerary, containing such useful details as the names of the best hotels, merchants and dragomen, the things to be seen and the order in which to see them, the number of days or weeks to be spent in various places, the fees to be paid to government officers and others, and the approximate total expenses of a six months trip.

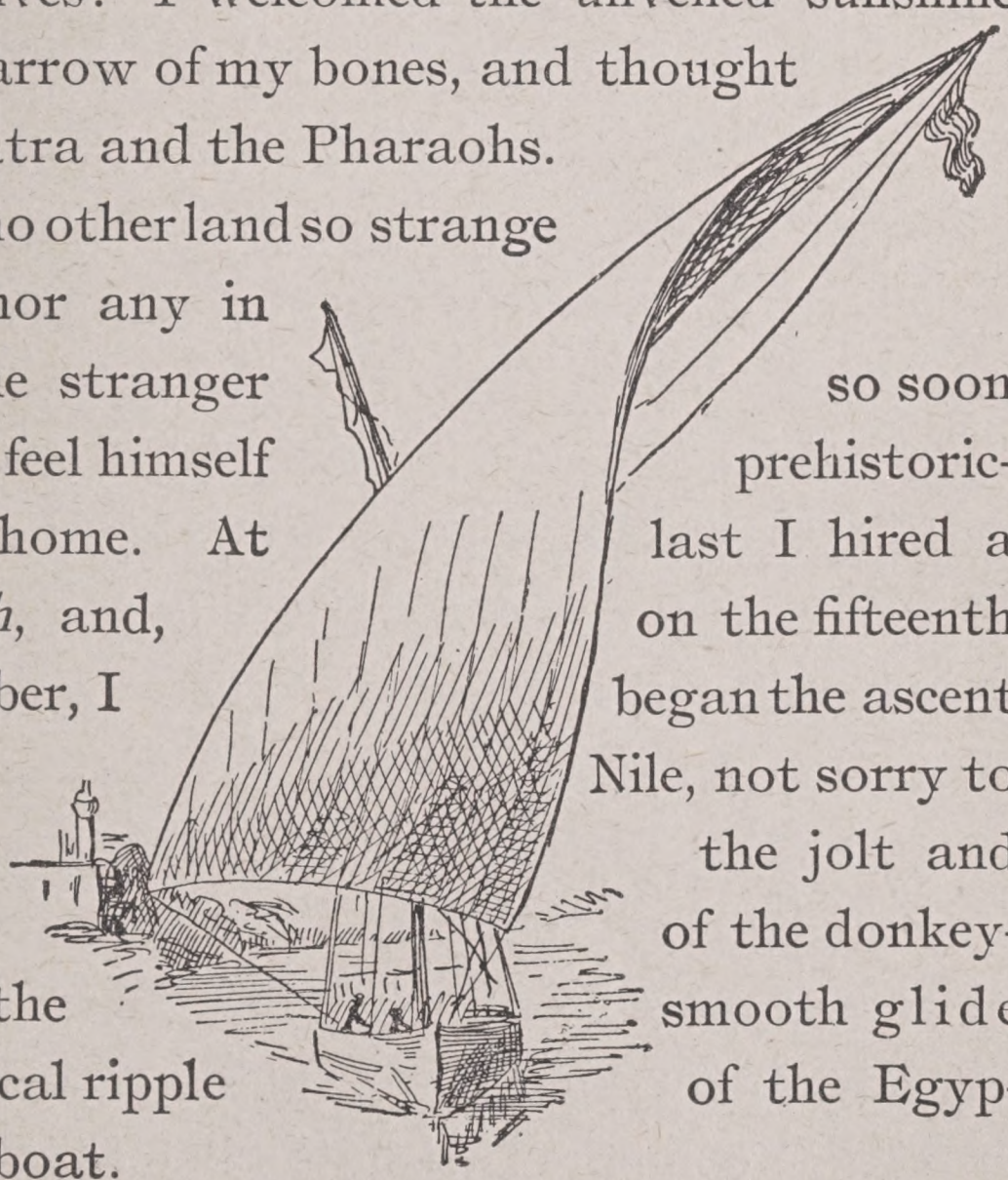
"There you are, my dear boy," said he, handing me the paper, "and when you get home, if you don't confess that your winter on the Nile was the pleasantest experience of your travels, I'll stand a dinner for a dozen at Delmonico's, and you shall make a speech!" As we shook hands at parting, he added, "Mind and don't forget to look up old Carigliano. Charming old maniac—worth all the rest of the trip put together!"

I embarked for Alexandria a few days later, and on the fifth of November we sighted the Pharos, in a temperature of seventy-eight degrees, and in the

midst of a color, a movement, a picturesqueness, and a strangeness, such as are to be met with only in the East. The wharves crowded with shipping, the ports, the villas and the palaces, glowed in the calm clear light of the oriental afternoon. I landed at the custom house in a perfect Babel and jostled by a crowd of dark-hued faces, bare legs, and scanty but gorgeously fine clothing. In a whirl of gesticulation, broken English, and rapacious, good-humored excitement, I had my trunks examined and was driven (following Haymaker's advice) to the Hotel Europe. There I secured the services of Ahmed Hassan as dragoman, and my Egyptian campaign began.

Everybody has made the same campaign, or has read accounts of it, so that I will not enlarge upon my individual experiences. I stayed in Alexandria a week, and then took the train through the green antiquity of immemorial Egypt, as far as Cairo. There I remained a month—long enough to begin to feel in harmony with the oriental idea. In other words, I began to get used to turbans, to nakedness, to the union of inconceivable squalor and splendor; to streets a yard wide crammed with donkeys, camels, merchandise, and the population of a score of barbarous countries; to the awful

repose of the living desert, and to the immortal simplicity of the mysterious pyramids and of the Sphinx. I became accustomed to a sky from which no rain ever fell, and to a valley whose verdure was derived from a spring which no man had ever discovered. I grew familiar with the cry of the muezzin from the minarets, and with the calm and shadowy interior of the domed and splendid mosques. Egypt is the stimulus and the despair of adjectives! I welcomed the unveiled sunshine to the marrow of my bones, and thought of Cleopatra and the Pharaohs. There is no other land so strange as this, nor any in which the stranger comes to feel himself so soon prehistoric-ally at home. At last I hired a *dahabeah*, and, on the fifteenth of December, I began the ascent of the Nile, not sorry to exchange the jolt and wriggle of the donkey-back for the smooth glide and musical ripple of the Egyp-tian sail-boat.



Now ensued three weeks of enforced but delicious

inactivity, during which I had leisure to digest what I had seen, and to prepare myself for what might be to come. Though the Nile flows out of the dead past, it is itself anything but lifeless. The current runs rapidly; boats flit in all directions, impelled by oar or sail; voices are continually heard, in song, shout, and laughter; wild geese sit on the long sand strip or fly honking overhead. Cairo, with its silvery domes and minarets, sinks slowly beneath the northern horizon; on our left, beyond the desert, are the notched hills of Mokattam; on our right, the wide valley, green with abundant grain, beautiful with rows of palms, noisy with the shrill voices of dark-robed women clustered on the banks, populous with mud villages and squatting, staring Arabs. Here and there a *shadoof* laboriously irrigates the plain, or, higher up the river, the creaking *sakia* not less primitively fulfils its office. The days are a long glory of sunshine; the nights, a soft splendor of stars. We are sailing into the earliest twilight of human history; but earth and sky were never clearer or more bright. We lose all sense of time; the mere luxury of existence obliterates it; what is a lifetime compared with the immeasurable ages

which gaze down upon us from the margins of this mighty stream?

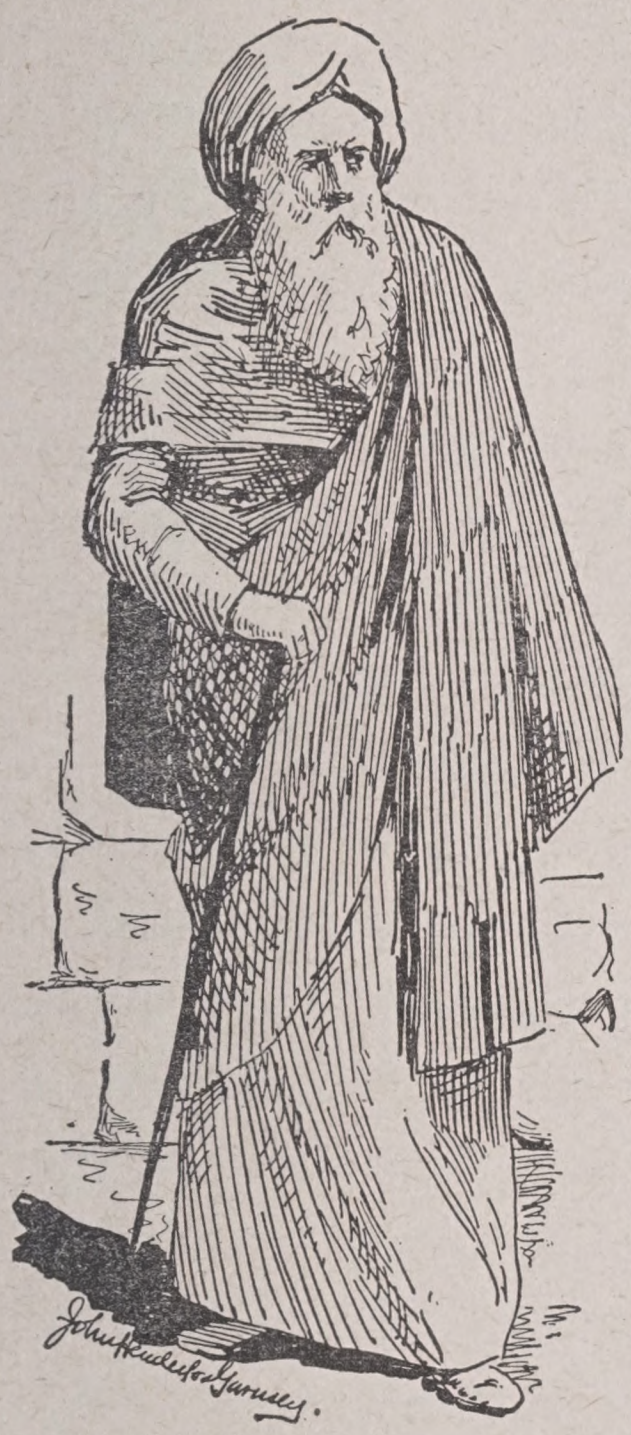
It was at the close of the first week in January of the new year, that, coming on deck one morning early, I saw opening before me the great valley of Thebes. It was a splendid morning—it seemed to me even more splendid than usual. A couple of vultures, sitting on the high western bank, rose in the air and sailed away towards the Lybian hills, whose clear gray outline cut the purple sky. Were they going to seek for food in the tombs there? The plain, of vast extent, and green as the emerald, is unequally divided by the broad, swift running of the Nile; of the ancient city nothing is yet visible; though, with a good telescope, one might perhaps discern in the southern distance the forms of the twin *colossi* of the Pharaoh Amunoph, and the matchless obelisk of Hatasoo Thothmes. Nevertheless, a glow of memory and anticipation came upon me; for here was the scene of a civilization more sumptuous and earlier than any in recorded history. For each stalk of grain that waves now in the northern breeze, there was once a living man, with ancestors before him and a posterity to follow; and the energy, power, and magnificence of their existence has dwarfed and made

pallid all that came after them. As we continued to move slowly up the stream, the world-famous ruins loomed larger and more distinct; and mud villages of the present inhabitants, clustered near or upon these gigantic fragments, were like the nests of swallows under the eaves of a cathedral. It seemed as if no being of less stature and ability than Memnon himself could have hewn out and piled together such immeasurable miracles of stone.

I had made my arrangements for a prolonged stay in Thebes; and as inns are not plentiful in that region, I made a hotel, and a very comfortable one, of my *dahabeah*. We made fast near the bank, close to the temple of Luxor, and while I ate my dinner Ahmed Hassan engaged in a personal conflict with fifty or a hundred Arabs, who wanted to sell the *howadji* all the spoils of Egypt, from the time of Menes, the eternal, down to the latest Ptolemy. Presently I came on deck, and getting into our boat, Ahmed and I were rowed across to the western shore, where donkeys and more Arabs were awaiting us, and prepared to take a preliminary gallop in the direction of Karnak, a mile or two down the river.

Among the Arabs I noticed one man, who,

though with them, was evidently not of them.



He was tall, and of dignified bearing, and his full beard, which was nearly white, fell down over his breast. His eyes were blue, and very bright; their glance was penetrating, but restless. His complexion, though tanned by the sun, had been originally fair; his broad forehead was partly concealed by a white turban, and he wore full Turkish trousers gathered at the knee, while over his close-fitting undergarment was thrown a flowing cloak, which he gathered about him as he stood. In spite of his oriental costume, however, I was quite sure this man was not of Eastern birth; and the manner in which he had scrutinized my face and appearance seemed to indicate that his interest in me, if he had any, was of another kind than would be felt by a real son of the desert.

"Who is that?" I inquired of Ahmed, as we jogged along.

"He? Oh, he ver strange man, come here long time, tink from Europe. Five year—ten year—allays see he; he ver wise—say he crazy."

"What is his name?"

"Oh, not know right name; call he Kehr-el-Lans Effendi. He go much tomba; mebbe hunt antika; but not know."

"Does he live here?"

"Tink he live Temple Medinet Abou. We go bimeby—mebbe find he. Plenty time talk he."

There was an impression on my mind that I had heard something about this mysterious personage; but it was too vague at the moment, to enable me to analyze it; and the overpowering spectacle of Karnak effectually put the matter out of my head for the time being. But, a few days afterward, we visited Medinet Abou; and while I was endeavoring to determine, with the aid of Ahmed and a guide book, which portion of the ruins was the later work, and which that of the sister of Thothmes, the same dignified figure that I had seen on the river bank suddenly appeared from behind a neighboring column; and after saluting me gravely, proceeded, with much cour-

tesy, and in the French tongue, to enlighten me on the question. It was soon evident that he was profoundly versed in the lore of ancient Egypt; and I was particularly struck with his manner when mentioning Hatasoo Thothmes; or, as he called her, Queen Amunuhet. His voice, when pronouncing her name, was lowered to a reverential murmur; and he passed the palm of his hand down his face from his forehead to his chin—an oriental gesture signifying homage.

"She was a remarkable woman," I ventured to observe.

"There was none like her," he replied. "She had many subjects, many worshipers; and one at least," he added, with a sigh, and clasping his hands on his heart, "still survives, and walks the earth in the likeness of a man!"

At this moment I was visited by an inspiration of memory; the recollection of my friend Haymaker's injunction flashed over me. "Pardon me if the question is indiscreet," I said, "but have I not the honor of addressing Monsieur Carigliano?"

He bowed slightly. "I once bore that name," he replied. "But, for twenty years, since I have lived here, it has been as a mask which I have cast

aside. My true name might, perhaps, be found on one of these stones; but it has never been uttered by living lips."

"So this," I thought to myself, "is Haymaker's 'charming old maniac!' His acquaintance certainly seems to be worth cultivating. To hear him talk, one would suppose he had enjoyed personal relations with a princess who died thirty-five hundred years ago! That is a form of mania that ought to be enquired into." Aloud I said, "I wish I might hope to enjoy the benefit of further intercourse with you. I am deeply interested in all that appertains to the history of the Pharaohs; and especially," I added, meeting his eyes, "in the age of the great Thothmes."

The change of expression that lightened his face showed me that I had touched a favorable chord. "It is a long time," he said, "since I have held converse with a member of what are called the civilized races; but I feel moved to speak to you; and, since you express interest in a matter nearly affecting me, it will give me pleasure to oblige you. If you will come to this spot to-morrow evening alone, I will take you to my abode, and do my best to give you satisfaction." I thanked him heartily, and promised to be on hand; he bowed, again

saluted me gravely, and, retiring, was soon lost to sight behind the huge, thickly planted columns of the wondrous temple.

When I explained to Ahmed the purport of our conversation, he strongly advised me to have nothing to do with the adventure. He declared that "Kehr-el-Lans Effendi" was a powerful magician, and was quite capable of putting me under a spell and shutting me up for a thousand years in some forgotten tomb of the hills. He was often heard conversing in an unknown tongue with spectres; and was suspected of kidnapping the babies of the neighboring poor people, and offering them up as sacrifices to the heathen deities, whom he was supposed to worship. At the very least, Ahmed added, this redoubtable wizard would in some way compel me to pay for my escape from his clutches with an immense sum of money. In spite of these warnings, however, I held to my purpose; and about sunset the next day, I presented myself, alone, at the appointed spot. In a few minutes Carigliano made his appearance; and I followed him through the ruins for a distance of perhaps fifty yards. I then saw him stoop, and push against a slab of granite, set in an apparently solid portion of the temple wall. It moved, as if upon a

hidden pivot, and disclosed a flight of steps leading downward. The darkness was intense; and for a moment I hesitated. Having come so far, however, I was determined to see the end of the adventure, and I accordingly descended. I heard his footsteps preceding me; and then a light flashed up, and I found myself in a subterranean chamber which bore evidence of being used as an abode. It was of fair height, and about twenty feet in length by fifteen in width. The walls were of polished stone, engraved with pictures and hieroglyphics. It contained a mattrass, and various simple but sufficient appliances of life. Everything was neat and clean, and the air was pure, though the method of ventilation was not apparent. The light proceeded from a large lamp of antique design which depended from the ceiling.

Some cushions at the head of the room served as a divan, and upon this Carigliano motioned me to be seated, while he brought forward two long-stemmed pipes, which we lighted and smoked. For some time our conversation was laconic, and on indifferent topics. But at length my entertainer took the pipe from his lips, fixed his eyes upon me, and spoke as follows:

"I have admitted you to this chamber, whither no other guest has ever penetrated, not merely for the sake of gratifying your curiosity, but because the time has come when—if ever—the history of my life must be unfolded. To-morrow it will be twenty years since the event occurred which revealed to me my destiny; and yours are the last mortal eyes that will behold me. Before I vanish forever, I desire to leave some testimony behind me as to my past and my future.

"I came to Egypt at twenty-eight years of age, as an *attaché* of a scientific expedition sent here by the French government. My technical duties were to decipher and to take copies of the more important hieroglyphic writings and inscriptions in the tombs and temples. But I had, for a number of years previous, given my whole attention to the study of ancient Egyptian subjects, and was, even at that time, more profoundly versed than any other scholar in its problems and mysteries. I had always felt an especial and peculiar inclination toward these researches; it seemed to me far more like recalling what I had once known, than as breaking absolutely new ground in knowledge. The scenes and persons of the days of the Pharaohs were as vivid in my imagination as the

memories of yesterday; I spoke their language and I comprehended their wisdom. And when, for the first time, I breathed the air of the Nile valley, and felt the sand of the desert beneath my feet, and beheld the mighty monuments of a vanished past, a voice in my heart seemed to tell me that this was no foreign country, but my home.

"It was here in Thebes that my duties chiefly lay, and it was here, also, that the mysterious home-feeling was most strong. From the first, I needed no guide; each step I took was on familiar ground; and as I gazed over the valley of ruins, some secret faculty of my mind reconstructed the scenes of four thousand years ago, and I saw once more the splendid city throbbing with life and sparkling with wealth, and witnessed the triumph of the kings, the processions and sacrifices of the priests, the glittering array of the soldiers, and the throng and tumult of the people. It was a waking dream, but it made the reality of the present seem unsubstantial. And ever and anon—especially when sauntering about the ruins of this temple—I was sensible of another feeling: a strange tremor and yearning of the heart, which I could not understand, yet which, could I have fathomed it, would,

I thought, have proved the key whereby all else that was perplexing might be unlocked.

"One morning I arose early, and took my sketching materials, intending to spend the day in one or other of the great tombs that honeycomb the western hills. A foot-path leads over the ridge beyond Medinet Abou,—a track of powdered limestone,—and so, by a steep descent, brings one to the naked and desolate gorges beyond, where the Pharaohs were entombed. On reaching the summit of this ridge, I turned, and for a few moments gazed back on the wide valley of the Egyptian capital. The sun had just risen; its light flashed across the long curve of the Nile, and touched the lips of Memnon, as he sat eternal on his throne, his shadow falling far behind him over the green expanse of waving grain at his base. Involuntarily I bent forward, as if to catch the music of the response which, as tradition says, the colossal deity was wont to make to the salutation of the sun-god. And, in truth, a deep, melodious sound seemed to resound in the air—though whether proceeding from Memnon's lips, or from the heavens above, or from the depths of my own breast, I could not tell; a sound that resolved itself into words, saying, 'Pass on, thou favored one, and

fear not! Thy queen awaits thee!' And down I rode into the shadow and silence of the abyss of tombs.

"Threading my way among loose bowlders, and down a narrow and devious track, I reached the bottom of the descent, and wound along the length of the ravine. It had been my first intention to enter one of the tombs of the kings; but I was impelled to press onward, and at length I entered another gorge, lying further toward the heart of the hills, which, as I knew, had been set apart for the interment of the queens of Egypt. Here, a sense of solitude more profound than any I had before experienced came over me; but accompanying it, and even arising out of it, was a feeling of being conducted and inspired by some intelligence or personality not my own. I fell into an abstracted mood, in which I scarcely noted the way I was going; until at length I came involuntarily to a pause, and, as it were, awoke, and gazed around me.

"I was in a region so wild and savage, so naked and desolate, that it seemed as if no human being, before me, could ever have penetrated there. Rocky walls, wholly devoid of vegetation, arose on each side, and climbed heavenward, as if they

would meet in the depths of the purple sky. Loose fragments of limestone hung on the ledges of the precipices, or lay in confused masses on the narrow floor of the tortuous valley. The sun, now some hours high, flung its white luster on the western walls, yet only the upper portion of them was illuminated. No sign of life, not even an insect or a bird, disturbed the stillness; no sound was audible but the hoof-tramps of the ass that I bestrode, which were echoed in exaggerated volume from the imprisoning cliffs. On my left hand was a vertical face of rock, the base seeming to rest upon a mounded slope, composed of detached and shattered blocks. I dismounted and clambered up this ascent, and then beheld, to my surprise, the distinct outlines of a picture graven into the limestone. It covered a space about four feet in length and breadth; and from its unusual situation, as well as from its remarkable intrinsic character, it strongly fixed my attention. It represented the body of a woman, apparently of high rank, lying on a pallet; and as I judged from certain accessories, about to be prepared for embalming. But beside her stood the figure of a man in soldier's garb, who, with outstretched hand, seemed about to take the woman's heart

from her bosom. Some of the details of the picture indicated that it dated back as far as the time of Thothmes—the period of the Hebrew Exodus; and yet the cutting of the lines was as sharp and undefaced as if the artist had but just given the finishing stroke of the chisel.

"I lost no time in setting up my easel, and, preparing to make a careful copy of this picture, I sat on a detached fragment of stone, with my right hand toward the face of the cliff; and in drawing I rested my hand on the mahl-stick, the end of which, for convenience, I rested against the design I was copying. As, from time to time, I had occasion to alter the position of my hand and of the mahl-stick, it happened that its point at length rested upon that part of the picture where was represented the heart of the woman upon the pallet. At the same moment I was conscious of a slight jar, causing me to make a false stroke; and the mahl-stick slipped from its place. I looked up and saw—what I had not noticed before—that the entire surface of the stone upon which the picture was engraven was sunk some distance below the surrounding surface of the rock. The depression was slight, not more than half an inch; but as I looked, it became gradually deeper and yet more

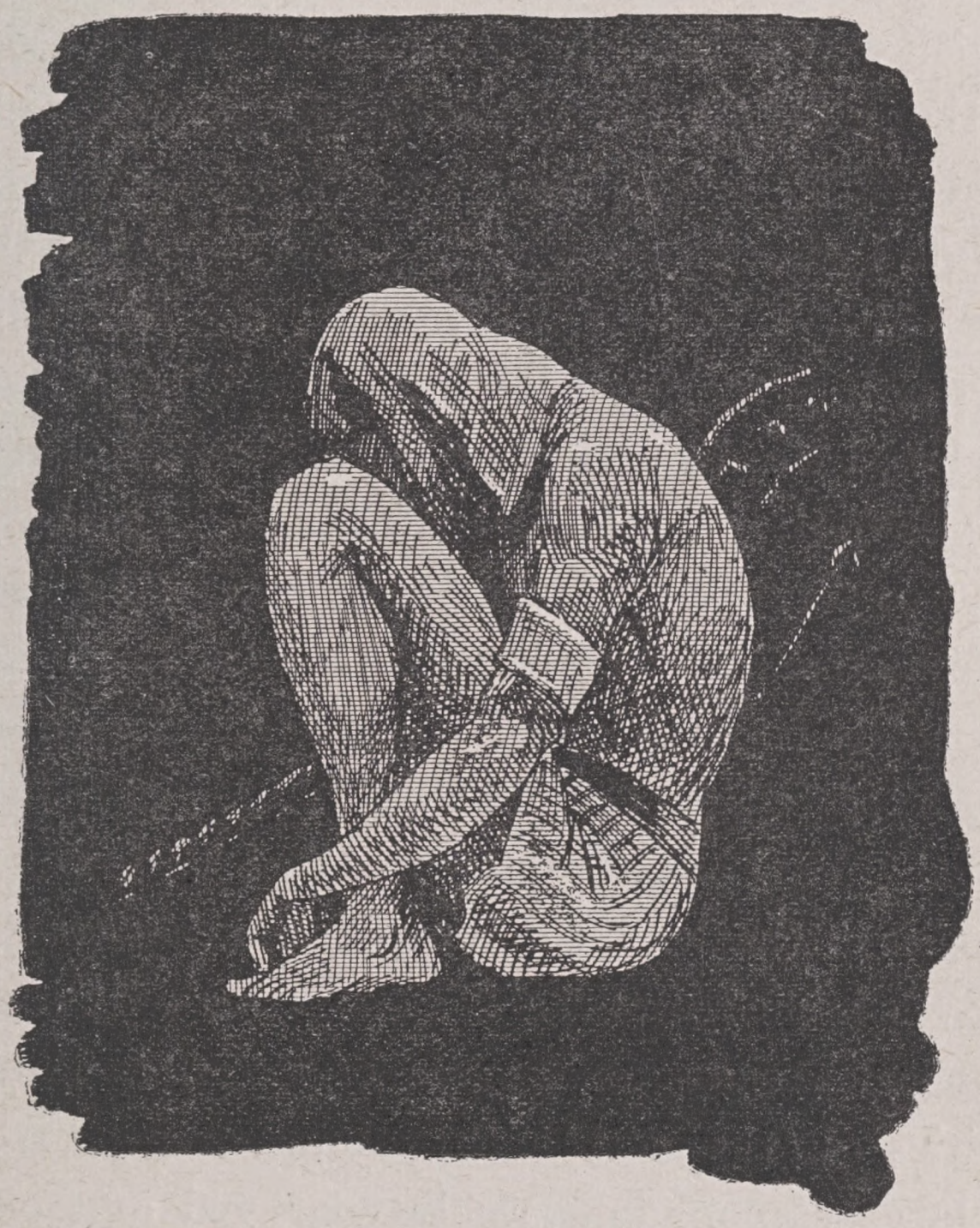
deep; it was now two inches and still increasing. In the course of a few minutes, the pictured stone had receded as much as a foot, with a steady but slowly accelerating movement. Overcome with wonder, I continued to gaze at this singular phenomenon, until the stone was nearly out of sight. The direction it took was slightly inclined upward; and I perceived that the polished surfaces upon which it traveled were finely grooved, the grooves corresponding with ridges in the moving stone, which fitted into the former.

"By this time I had in some degree recovered my self-possession, and resolved to pursue the investigation of this marvel. I had brought a small lamp with me, for use in the tombs, and this I now lighted, and holding it in my hand, I crawled into the cavity left by the receding stone. This cavity was now about ten feet in depth, the sides as smooth as glass, and ascending at an angle of about twenty degrees. But after following it a little further, there was a sudden enlargement to double the former dimensions. I was now able to stand upright, and to walk on a passage beside the moving stone, instead of following in its track, as heretofore. It continued to travel upward beside me; and I now discovered that the immediate

cause of its ascent was a fine but strong cable of bronze, which was fastened to its inner side, and was being drawn inward by some force beyond. The push which I had accidentally given with the mahl-stick to that particular spot in the picture which represented the woman's heart, had probably given the impetus which set the machinery in motion.

"After proceeding up the slippery incline for perhaps a hundred feet, I came to a level space, reaching to an unknown extent beyond, above, and on each hand. And here, by the dusky light of my lamp, I saw the semblance of a human figure, slowly and steadily turning the handle of a machine resembling a windlass, to the body of which the bronze cable was attached, and around which it was being wound. The figure wore the Egyptian head-dress and garb, and his face and limbs were of a brown hue; but so regular and rigid were his movements, and so imperfect was the light that I could not decide whether he was indeed a human being, or only himself a cunningly wrought part of the machine. I spoke to him but he returned no answer; and my own voice died away in a hollow whisper. As I stood there, the stone which had closed the entrance to the passage

reached the summit of the ascent; and the figure, after putting a check in the cog of his wheel, sank down beside it, with his face upon his knees, and



his hands clasped around his ankles, and became motionless in the attitude which, perhaps, had been undisturbed till now for more than thirty centuries.

"Shading my lamp with my hand, I moved along the walls of the chamber, which lay transversely across the ascending passage by which I had come. It was lined with white stucco on which were painted in brilliant colors such scenes of the daily life and habits of the Egyptians, as are customarily found on the walls of tombs. At length I came to an opening nearly opposite that by which I had entered; a corridor extending further into the mountain. After following it for awhile, I was brought to another corridor at right angles to it, going in both directions. I chose the turn to the left, and soon came to another turn, which descended for a long distance, and, just as it seemed to come to an end, admitted me into a hall much larger than the first, and more richly decorated. Here were represented the various ceremonies of the dead, the liturgies relating to their travels in the realm of shades, together with astronomical designs, and figures of monsters and of deities. In the center of the room, moreover, stood a large sarcophagus, richly engraved and ornamented, but empty. Here my explorations had apparently come to an end, for there was no visible outlet from the chamber. Accustomed as I was, however, to the concealments of these gigantic

excavations, I felt assured that the end was not yet; and when I applied my shoulder to the upper end of the sarcophagus, it yielded to the pressure, and sliding forward, disclosed an oblong aperture in the floor beneath it, into which I unhesitatingly descended; and after wandering blindly for some minutes, first in one direction and then in another, I discerned a gleam of light in front of me, and, the the next moment, entered an apartment the solemn grandeur of which seemed a fitting culmination of all that had preceded it.

"In the center of the lofty ceiling was a representation of the winged sun; and from it, or through it, proceeded a soft but powerful light, like that of phosphorescence in its nature, though bright enough to fill every corner of the vast hall with a clear radiance. The walls glowed with color, and here were the sacred figures of Isis and Osiris, of Horus, of Athor, Anubis, Ptah, and Nofre Atmos. But these things scarcely impressed themselves on my senses, for I was arrested by a far greater marvel. The figures on the walls were but shadows; but the floor of this mighty chamber was populous with forms of concrete substance; with men and women who breathed and moved and lived. They lived, and yet it scarcely seemed

like life, so slow, so almost imperceptible were their movements. It was as if the space of an ordinary lifetime had been drawn out, for them, to the measure of myriad years; that days were to them as moments, and years as hours, and centuries as years; that while the breath came and went through their nostrils, a moon might wax and wane; and that the lifting of their faces was as the turning of the earth upon its axis. It was, perhaps, the dry, unchanging atmosphere of this region, hidden deep beneath the heart of the mountain, and separated from the world without for so many hundred years, that had wrought this torpor in them; I myself had become already sensible of an alteration in the beating of my pulse and a subtle lethargy in my movements. At first, as I looked upon this strange assemblage, they seemed each one to have paused, in the accomplishment of some characteristic act. One swarthy figure was shaping a necklet of gold brought from the deadly mines of Ethiopia; another, with mallet uplifted, was chiseling a statue; still another, held in his hand a *scarabæus*, which he was about to polish. In another place, a man was in the act of blowing glass; near him was one with colors and a brush, making as if to add another touch to his

picture; others were in the attitude of turning the potter's wheel, of breaking flax, or of playing draughts. In one corner of the room were a group of women seated on the ground, with a ball which they seemed about to toss from one to another. But, as I contemplated them, their apparent insensibility resolved itself into motion, and I saw that they were not carven images, but that the hearts which had begun to beat when Moses was an infant, still sent the blood through their veins, though in pulses as measured as the tides of ocean.

"Meanwhile, my presence was seemingly unnoticed; no eye had met mine, and I was as apparently invisible to them as if the abyss of ages that lay between us had been as wide in space as it was in time. But, as I paused near the entrance of the hall, uncertain what to do, my ears caught a faint sound of solemn music; a portal of stone at the opposite extremity of the vista was slowly unfolded and from it issued, with lingering but majestic step, a stately procession. First came boys, bearing censers in the form of a golden arm, in the hollowed hand of which burned fragrant balls of *kyphi*, diffusing a heavy perfume. Then followed an array of tall and grave-looking men in white robes, and wearing on their foreheads the sacred ostrich

feather, emblem of truth, and sign of the initiated priest. Next came a bevy of attendants, men and women, brilliantly attired, some carrying vessels of Phœnician glass that sparkled in the light; and one who bore on high and shook aloft the golden sistrum, with its bars and rings, emblem of Venus. Finally, borne in a litter on the shoulders of twelve Nubian slaves, appeared a woman, at the sight of whom my heart stood still and my breath failed me. She was dusky as the Nile at evening, and beautiful with a beauty that belongs to the morning of the world. Her eyes were long, black, and brilliant; and their gaze was royal. The outline of her smooth cheeks was oval, and her features were the features of the Pharaohs, but softened with all the loveliness of a woman. Above her low, broad forehead was placed the stately head-dress of an Egyptian princess; and, from her left temple, a long black braid, plaited with golden threads, hung down to her feet, as a sign of her royal lineage. Her robe was purple, and of a tissue so delicate that the contours of her perfect form were discernible through its silky folds. Round her neck, and resting upon her bosom was a broad collar woven of pearls and precious stones; her arms were encircled by bracelets of massive gold,

and in her girdle were woven turquoises from Serbal, talismans of good fortune. At her right hand crouched a monkey, sacred to Thoth, the god of her race; and on her left a white cat from Persia, in whose long silky fur the slender fingers of the princess were hidden.

"When the bearers of the litter reached the center of the hall, beneath the illuminated semblance of the winged sun, they knelt and slowly lowered their burden to the floor. Then, with a leisurely movement, the princess arose, and stood erect to her full height, and her eyes slowly fixed themselves upon mine, for I remained opposite to her, in a vacant space alone; and a spell seemed to be upon me, so that I could

move neither hand nor foot, nor remove my gaze from her transcendent countenance; yet it seemed to me a countenance that I had seen before, and had known well, and passionately loved. And it seemed to me that I was not myself, or that a truer self than I had hitherto known looked through my eyes and breathed through my nostrils.

"Then the princess spoke, in slow and measured tones, and in the clear tongue of ancient Egypt that I knew and remembered as my own.

"'Man,' she said, 'art thou he for whom I have waited?'

"And I answered her, 'I am Pantour, the son of Amosis.'

"And she said, 'Dost thou know me?'

"And I answered, 'Thou art Amunuhet the queen, the sister of Pharoah; thou art she who didst build the temple and the obelisk, and didst perform many mighty works.'

"And she said, 'Speak on, Pantour, and tell what thou knowest.'

"And I said, 'O queen, I loved thee; and thou didst deign to return my love. And our love was hidden, that none might know it. And in the midst of our love death came to thee. And when

thy body was prepared for the embalmers, I stood beside thee, and there was none to see me. And I put forth my hand and took thy heart out of thy bosom; because, I said, "My heart is hers: let me, therefore, keep her heart in the stead of it." And I kept thy heart, and none knew what I had done. But when death overtook me also, I called my friend to me and charged him, saying: "When I am dead, take thou my heart from my bosom and put in the place of it the heart of the Queen Amunuhet, whom I loved, but my heart thou shalt burn upon the altar of Osiris." And he swore to me to do as I had commanded. And in that same hour my spirit departed.'

"Then the queen answered, 'Thou hast said. Hear, now, what things have befallen me. For, when I entered into Kar-Neter, Osiris appeared to me, and mine eyes were dazzled, and my limbs were as if without life; neither could I speak, or eat food, or do battle with my enemies. But I prayed to the gods, and behold, my strength returned to me; and holding the sacred beetle above my head, I entered into Hades. Then did Typhon assail me with many monsters, and I fought sore combats with them; and I had been overcome, but that Nir gave me to eat of the tree of life, and the

Divine Light instructed me. So I went on, and passed through many changes, and at last I entered once more into the body from which I had gone forth; and then, undergoing many trials and temptations, I sailed down the river that flows under the foundations of the world, and gained the Elysian fields. Then was I brought to the great judgment hall, where sat Osiris and the two and forty assessors, and to them I confessed both my evil and my good. But when they brought the scales of justice, with the ostrich feather of truth in the balance, and would have weighed my heart against the ostrich feather, behold the heart was gone out of my bosom. Then the judges took counsel together and said, "Thou shalt wait three thousand years, and half a thousand years, and he who took thy heart from thee shall come before thee; and if he will deliver it up to thee again, thou shalt enter into the bliss of Osiris." Now, therefore, the time is come. Deliver back to me that which thou didst take from me; and when thou hast fulfilled thy course, and conquered Typhon, and overcome temptations, thou shalt afterward be united to me in the kingdom of Osiris, and the bliss of us twain shall be unto everlasting.'

"Thus spake the Queen Amunuhet; and when

she had made an end of speaking, she sat on her throne, and waved her hand to the chief of priests, that he should take me, and lay me on the altar, and pluck her heart out of my breast. But then great fear came upon me, insomuch that I turned and fled away from before her. My limbs were as though sheathed in lead, and though I strove mightily, my steps were slow, for the air of the tomb had entered into my lungs, and all power of swiftness was gone from me. But the chief of the priests, and the other priests, and the attendants, pursued me; and though their steps also were slow, yet, by reason of the air that had entered the tomb from the outer world, they gathered ever new strength and swiftness; so that it seemed as if I must be taken. Nevertheless, striving with all my might, I gained the upper platform where sat he who worked upon the windlass that lifted the stone from the entrance; and even then the hands of my pursuers were upon me. And he of the windlass arose, and loosed the check from the wheel, and the great stone slid down the incline toward its place. But I also plunged downward, and came in front of the stone as it descended, and was swept out before it, and the entrance was closed behind me; and I fell, and knew no more."

Here Carigliano paused, and bending forward as he sat, hid his face upon his knees. During several minutes there was silence; for he had spoken toward the close in a strain of exalted earnestness and passion; and the spell of his words was upon me. No doubt, the man must be mad; but his hallucination was so remarkable, and his expression of it so eloquent that, for the time being, I could not regain the equilibrium of my judgment.

"It was a narrow escape!" I said, at last.

He sat erect, passed his hand over his forehead, and sighed. "It was a dastardly escape!" he replied; "and for these twenty years past I have repented it. I was found that evening by some wandering Arab, and taken back to Luxor. For some weeks I was ill with a fever; when I recovered, I tried in vain to find again the pictured stone; I have never set eyes upon it since. But, after a year of fruitless quest, Queen Amunuhet came to me one night in a dream, and told me that if, after waiting twenty years, I was prepared to make the restitution that she had demanded of me, the place of her tomb should be once more revealed to me, and I might enter in and deliver myself up to the altar. To-morrow the period of trial will be fulfilled, and I shall be seen of men no

more. You are the last to hear my voice, and to look upon my face. Henceforth, Pantour, the son of Amosis, belongs to the dead alone."

Soon after I returned to America, my friend Haymaker and I dined at Delmonico's; but I paid for the dinner.

"By the way," he exclaimed, as we sat over our coffee, "did you ever run across that fellow Carigliano?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Charming old maniac, isn't he?" continued my friend.

"He was a remarkable person, certainly."

"I think of running over to Egypt next winter, and I will make a point of looking him up again," said Haymaker, lighting a cigar.

"You won't find him," I answered. "The day after I last saw him he disappeared, and has never

been seen or heard of since. But, from certain indications, it was thought he had wandered into the ruins of the tombs of the queens; probably he found his way into one of them and never got out again. He had related some of his history to me the day before; and certain hints that he let fall have made me suspect that he had a foreshadowing of what was to befall him."

"Poor fellow," said Haymaker. "What a pity! Romantic, too! Told you his story, did he? What was it?"

"It's eleven o'clock," said I; "I'm going to bed."

"Or you might write it out," continued my friend, as we put on our hats. "You're always writing things; and I dare say you might find somebody to print it."

* * *

"I like a good ghost story," remarked Sam; "and this was one of a rather uncommon kind."

"It certainly was," replied the author. "I was not aware that ghosts remained in good condition so long as three thousand years."

"Philosophers tell us," put in a plump, swarthy gentleman of about five and thirty years, seated

next but one to the captain, "that time has no existence in the spiritual world; and we read in the good Book that 'A thousand years are but as yesterday.' As this is a time for stories, I would like to tell you of a little experience of my own that goes to show that three thousand years is by no means the remotest date in matters of this kind."

"Go ahead, sir," said Sam; "I dare say, for my part, that a ghost is like good wine—the older the better."

Thus encouraged, the swarthy gentleman unburdened his mind in this manner:

THE SWARTHY MAN'S STORY.

THE peculiar conditions of my birth probably accounted for my exceptional organization. It was a long time before I realized this, or that I was different from others. This ignorance on my part occasioned me a great deal of perplexity, and doubtless led others to believe that I was unbalanced in my mind. When I happened to speak about things that were as familiar to my apprehension as chairs and tables were to the vulgar, they stared, and either shook their heads ominously, or laughed. This lack of sympathy surprised and hurt me, and, in the end, made me hold my tongue and keep aloof from them. But although I felt myself a Pariah, I did not comprehend the reason of it. I imagined it must be because I was ugly, or, in

some way, disagreeable. As a matter of fact, I was far from being an ill-favored boy, and my manners were quiet and conciliating.

I have no personal recollection of my mother. Her temperament was characterized by the obscure affection known to pathology as hysteria. Names are useful, but they seldom explain anything. On the contrary, they often delude us into fancying that we understand things that are really a mystery to us. As regards my mother, I might say that her normal condition was what is commonly known as an abnormal one; in other words, more than half her life was spent in the state of trance. Her story was about as strange a one as my own; but it is the latter only that I am now to relate. I will only say that it was during one of her prolonged trances that I came into the world; and that when, some days or weeks afterward, she "awoke," as it is called, she did not know her own infant. Thereafter, my father kept her almost continually entranced; and in that condition, a year later, she expired.

As for my father, he was, so far as my knowledge of him goes, a man of brains. With a few modifications in his organization, he would have been a great man of science. But these were lack-

ing—or shall I say he rose above them?—and he became a mystic. He studied the spirit, and its connection with the body. He sought the final analysis of matter, and how to control it; time and space were to him subjective conditions of the mind concretely interpreted. I did not know until long afterward, the extent of his researches and attainments. He conversed with me but seldom, and never on those topics. He was, of course, aware of my exceptional congenital powers, but I am not sure that he ever made use of them for his own ends. His manner was habitually cold, and it never occurred to me that he felt any affection for me. And yet I am sure, now, that he must have done so. Perhaps he foresaw that the cultivation of my strange faculty could bring me only unhappiness, and therefore forbore to encourage me in it, although the forbearance cost him much information that he would have valued. But nature will have its way, and I found my fate in spite of his restraint.

He died while I was on the boundary between boyhood and manhood. He left me a sufficient fortune, and a library which, though not very large, was worth to one who knew how to use it its weight in gold. I did not know how to use it;

at all events, I never examined it, or informed myself even as to the titles of the volumes. The only books I cared to read were works of fiction, narratives of travel and adventure, and treatises on history and astronomy. Music and poetry also gave me intense pleasure, though, as regards music, my taste could not be called conventional. I most enjoyed the simplest harmonies; and I am disposed to think that I was able to hear sounds that are inaudible to most people. For instance, there is a distinct and exquisite music produced by alternate sunshine and shadow drifting across the meadows, on a day when the sky is peopled with masses of white cloud; and, of summer evenings, the precipitation of dew is accompanied by a subtle sound, rising and falling like the strains of an Æolian harp, but, of course, infinitely more refined than that. I could mention many similar examples. And this sensitiveness of hearing was accompanied by a corresponding acuteness of vision. Not that I could see to a greater distance, or detect more minute objects than the average of persons, but I plainly perceived things which were as invisible to the telescope and microscope as to the ordinary unassisted eyesight.

This faculty, however, varied in me exceedingly;

if my mind were disturbed or I were suffering from any physical disorder, it almost ceased to act

But, in a serene mood, I have seen waves of color, of hue and intensity varying with the note and the position, proceeding from the vibrating strings of a harp or violin; and my waking sight has constantly confirmed the fact, familiar to most who have experienced the mesmeric trance, that all persons are surrounded by a colored emanation or sphere, conformable to their several natures. But this is not all. Sometimes, while conversing with a man, or observing him quietly, I have seen other figures besides him. I knew these figures to be immaterial, but it would be impossible to say by what signs I was able to distinguish them from concrete persons. There were

generally four of the spiritual forms attached to each individual; and there was a strong resemblance on their part to him with whom they were associated. The man himself never appeared conscious of their presence; but I noticed that both his sayings and his actions were indirectly inspired by these attendants, though he possessed the power of choosing which pair of them he would be prompted by—whether by the evil pair or the good.

These phenomena, familiar to me as they were from my childhood up, never, so far as I can remember, occasioned me any surprise; they seemed altogether natural and reasonable, although, as I have already remarked, I soon found that no one else experienced them, and I therefore ceased to make any allusion to them. After my father's death, I continued to live in the same house, and went very little into society. I passed my time in reading and meditation, and in taking solitary walks. I had long been aware (without paying special attention to the fact, or reflecting upon its significance) that I often lapsed into a state which I could only compare to that of dreaming. It differed from that, however, in several essential respects. The scenes and persons which I beheld in these states were evidently real,

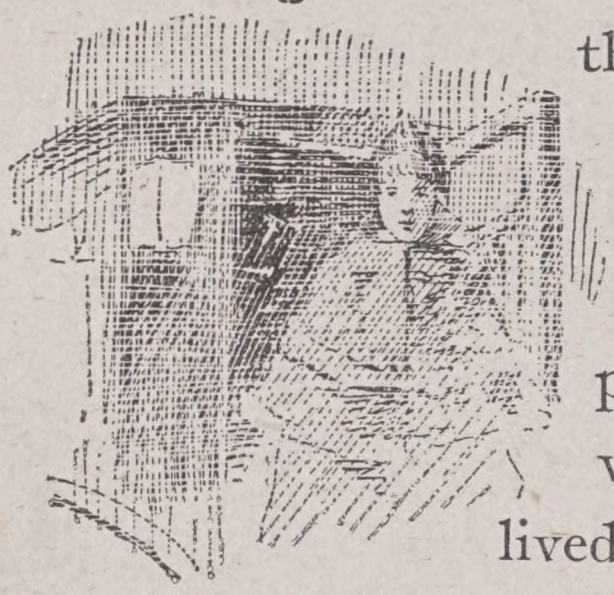
though I was not, as to my corporeal self, present in them. How, then, did I see them?

Had I been asked that question at the time, I should have answered, simply, that I saw them. Ordinary sight is a mystery as to its essence; and this further sight of mine seemed to me neither more nor less mysterious. I had never heard the word clairvoyance, and it would have explained nothing, if I had. At all events, not a day passed without my observing things that existed and occurrences that happened far away from where my body was. How far away they were I did not know; nor, indeed, did I at first realize that the things and persons were as real as those that immediately surrounded me. That discovery came later, as I shall presently describe. A peculiarity of my clairvoyance was, that it did not involve, as generally is the case, a suspension of my external consciousness. I saw, as it were, with the bodily and the mental eye at the same time. Nor did this lead, as you might suppose it would, to any confusion between the two sights. I could always clearly distinguish between the normal and the abnormal vision; though I could not have made anyone understand how I did it.

So time slipped away, until I was twenty-three

years old. It was at that age that I became acquainted with Virginia Graham. She was a handsome girl, tall, with black eyes and hair, and a clear white skin. Her father was a Scotchman by birth; he was a ship owner, and had been a sea captain. They lived about ten miles from my home; but my father had been acquainted with them in former years, and my own subsequent knowledge of them was therefore in the nature of a renewal of friendship. We met at a picnic; an annual merry-making that came off every Michaelmas. It was the first that I had attended; and I believe that the same was true of Virginia. I was accosted by the captain, who spoke of his previous acquaintance with Professor Markham (my father) and introduced me to Virginia. I talked with her all the afternoon. She affected me in a manner entirely novel to me. It was no fancy on my part; I could not be mistaken in her. The clairvoyant power that I possessed enabled me to divine at once her true character, which was pure and noble to a degree that I had never seen surpassed in woman. What may have been her impression of me I knew not, nor did I speculate about it. It was happiness to be with her, and that was enough for me.

We parted at length, and they drove away; I set out homeward on foot, being an active and tireless walker. As might be expected, my thoughts were busy with Virginia; and presently I found myself with her again. That is, I saw her driving along the moonlit road with her father, and they were now approaching the seaport town where they lived. I had never been in this town; but all its features were distinctly present to me. I saw the carriage turn into the main street, and stop at a large house on the corner. It was a house with a hip-roof, and a broad veranda with vines twining over it, and an old-fashioned arched doorway. Virginia alighted, and ran up the steps; the door opened, and she entered, while her father drove round to the stables. Virginia went into the dining



room, which faced toward the east, and remained a few minutes; then she mounted the stairs to her bed chamber to remove her wraps. At this moment the whole scene vanished, and I was on the lonely road, with my shadow moving beside me in the moonlight.

It was then, for the first time, that the singularity of the affair struck me. I had actually been with her, when nevertheless she was miles away in an opposite direction. It was no dream, nor even a vision. I halted in my tracks, and gazed about me. Had I been with her, indeed? Could I be in two places at once?

"Certainly I can," I answered myself. "The mind is free, and what is man but mind? His mind can travel to the ends of the earth, while his body remains at home. It is the mind that gives life and perception to the senses; therefore life and perception exist, not in the senses, but in the mind itself. Wherever it goes, then, it must take its perceptions with it. It is only reasonable."

I walked on again, and my thoughts took another turn. "If I have seen her thus to-night," I said, "what is to hinder my seeing her whenever I choose? It is true that she will not be aware of my presence; but I shall be the more free to con-

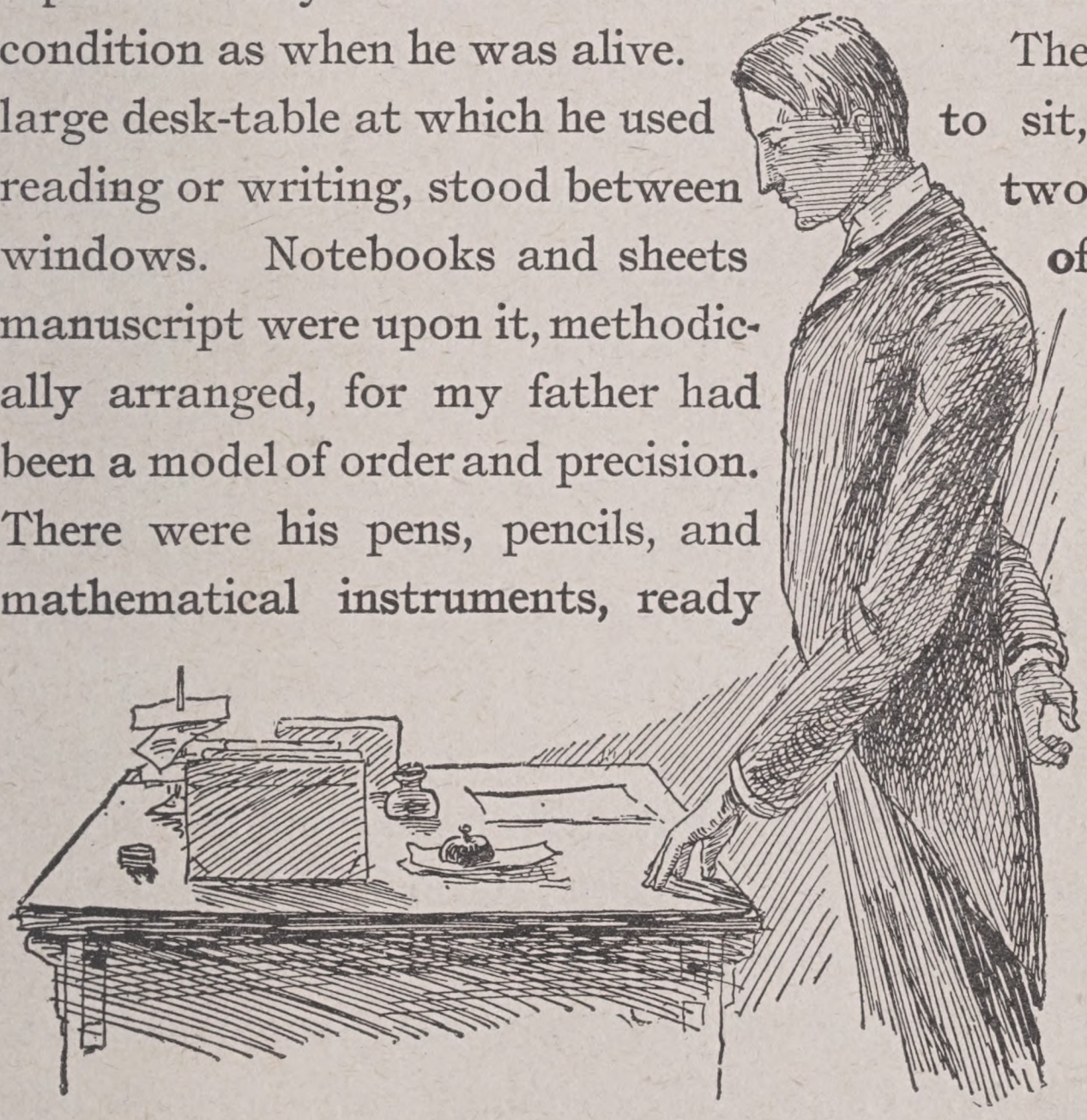
template her without interruption. I have only to wish to behold her, and I shall do so."

Here, however, I found myself in error. I attempted to transport myself to her once more, but in vain. I was powerless to repeat the experience. The condition was evidently an involuntary one, or at any rate subject to laws which I had not yet mastered. But it did not follow from that that I might not learn to control it. I resolved to set about doing so without delay.

I met with only partial success in my efforts. Sometimes, by fixing my thoughts upon Virginia for a long while, persistently, I attained to see her, more or less distinctly, and only so long as I could keep my will at its full tension. At other times, when I least expected it, I was with her; and these occasions were much the more satisfactory of the two. I could not fully solve the problem, ponder it how I would. I had in the meanwhile paid several visits to the Grahams, and had convinced myself that my clairvoyance had not deceived me; everything about the town and house was as I had found it in my vision. These visits also strengthened the affection I had conceived for Virginia; and I had reason to think that she fully returned the feeling. Her face brightened when I came near

her, and our lives seemed to support and illuminate each other. As long as we were together all was right and harmonious; troubles and annoyances only came when we were apart.

One day I went into my father's library. It was a place I rarely visited. It was in almost the same condition as when he was alive. The large desk-table at which he used to sit, reading or writing, stood between two windows. Notebooks and sheets of manuscript were upon it, methodically arranged, for my father had been a model of order and precision. There were his pens, pencils, and mathematical instruments, ready



placed for the hand that now was dust; the diagrams, the celestial globes, the volume of astrological calculations—all the paraphernalia of the student of hidden things. A thin gray dust lay over

these things, like the impalpable ashes of a vanished life. The chair in which he used to sit was pushed a little away from the table, as if he had just arisen out of it. It was upholstered in brown leather, much worn, but still sound; it was broad-seated, roomy, and comfortable. I threw myself down in it, and thought of the man who had transmitted to me the mysterious thread of life; so easily broken, so indestructible. As I sat there, his influence seemed to be upon me, and I understood him as I had never before done. The interests and aims which had controlled his life became, for the time being, a stimulus to my own.

The walls of the room were lined ceiling-high with broad shelves, in which were stored the rows of ancient volumes, bound in brown leather and white parchment, over the pages of which he had pored so deeply. But a small revolving bookstand stood within reach of the chair, and in this were kept the works in which he was more especially interested, or which he was at the moment consulting. I stretched forth my hand, and took out the one which came first.

It proved to be a sort of digest or history of the phenomena of second-sight, followed by an attempt to elucidate the philosophy of the matter. Some

statements that recalled my own experience caught my eye; I read on, and continued to read, hour after hour, until the increasing twilight deepened over the last page.

From that day, I became as assiduous a student as my father had been before me, and of the same books. I learned many things that enabled me to understand my own condition, and its relation to the normal state. I read, too, a number of volumes treating of the esoteric features of the Buddhistic faith, and their theory of life and vocation. Much of their tenets took a strong hold upon me, particularly the doctrines relative to the spiral of human existence, its periodic returns to activity and intervals of repose, and its final reabsorption into the universal life. This knowledge affected me like a reminiscence. I seemed to have known it before. I felt that I had indeed had a previous existence, somewhere, at some time. Where and when? Was there no closed volume of the memory that contained the story of that remote epoch, and which (did one but know the secret of that lock) might be opened and perused to-day? Meanwhile it became evident to me that clairvoyance—the genuine form of which is among the rarest of human gifts—was susceptible of far greater development

than it had yet received, at least among western races; and I resolved to set about its cultivation in a systematic and, so to say, scientific manner. I carried out this resolution with a perseverence and diligence that left me no opportunity to do or think of anything else. Even Virginia was neglected for the time being, though my not seeing her was partly due to the fact that she had accompanied her father on a visit to the metropolis, upwards of a hundred miles distant. But everything seemed to me of secondary importance compared with the power I aimed at, which was nothing else than to be able to transport myself, so far as my perceptions were concerned, to any point in space that I chose, and at any moment that suited me.

My success in some instances was so great as to nearly satisfy me; but in others, when the conditions were apparently the same, I entirely failed. For a long time I was at a loss to understand the reason of this discrepancy. The explanation, however, was simple enough, when once it occurred to me. In the metaphysical world—the sphere of thought and emotion—thought is presence. I am mentally in the society of the person upon whom my thoughts are fixed. But there is an indispensable requisite here: and that is sympathy. The

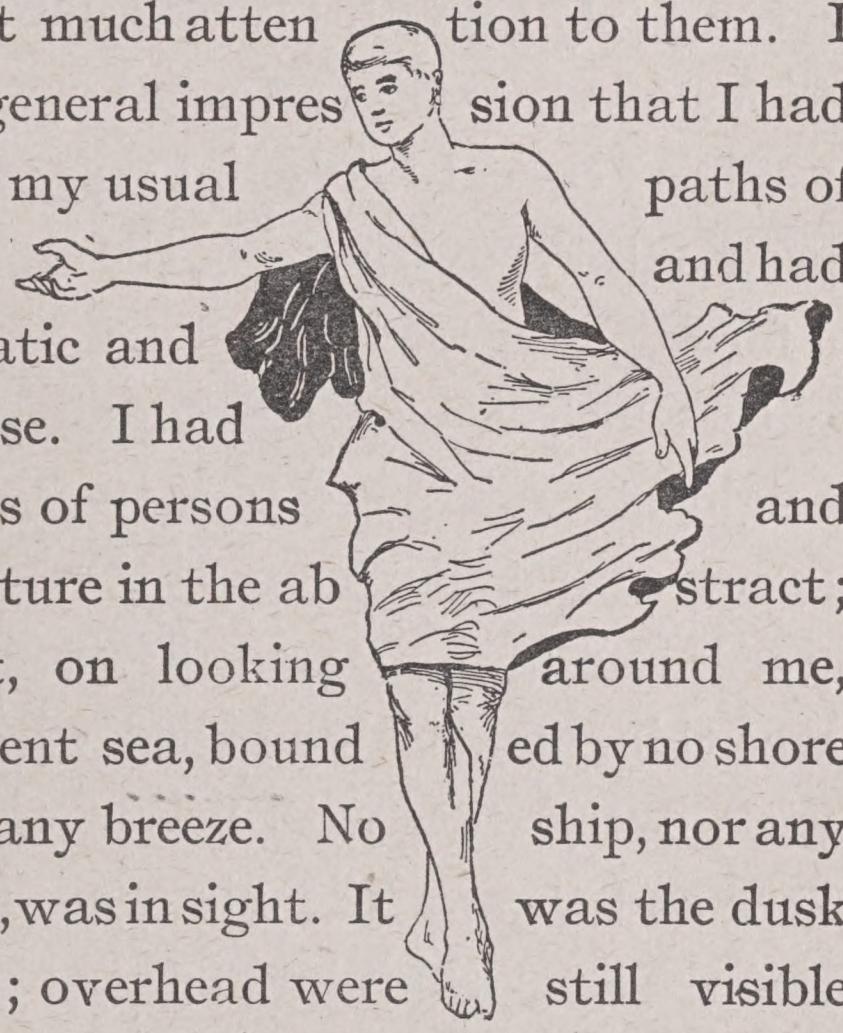
travels of the clairvoyant depend upon his sympathy with the human beings whom he would visit. Sympathy, in this connection, is to be understood in the broader sense of the word; it may be an affinity of liking, or of repulsion. The man or woman I hated may attract me as strongly as those I love. I now understood the cause of my failures. I attempted to go to—to be mentally present in—places where there was, so to speak, no place for me. Such a transmigration would only be possible to the clairvoyant who was controlled by some other will than his own, and with other affiliations than his. But I was my own sole agent in the matter. My journeys, though not limited as to distance, were circumscribed to some extent in direction. I had attempted, in some of my experiments, to leave the boundaries of this planet, and penetrate the secrets of other earths in the universe; but I had never been able to effect a landing on those wondrous shores. This had greatly disappointed me, but the reason of it was no longer obscure. Those worlds are, indeed, doubtless inhabited by human beings; but in the infinite scheme of creation, there is room for infinite variety, but no duplicate. The people of each of the planets present a phase of humanity differing

in some vital respect from one another, and from us. Therefore the spirit from this earth cannot come into communication with them. Hereafter, perhaps, when the depths and mysteries of our natures are more fully comprehended and revealed, we may find our way to these enigmatical brethren of ours, and study from them new lessons in the inexhaustible volume of being.

At this time I happened upon a new discovery, which put my disappointments out of my head. It grew out of some of my researches in esoteric Buddhism. The Buddhists hold that there is an inner plane of being, to which they give the name of the "Astral Light." Upon it are projected the living shadows or pictures of all that mankind has experienced since the creation. The eye which is opened to this plane can see the occurrences of the past enacted before his eyes by the phantoms of the beings who took part in them. These beings have a kind of life of their own, which can be stimulated by the sympathy and interest of the mortal spectator.

One evening I went into a deeper trance than usual. I had been traveling, without any special destination in view, from point to point, and at last found myself hovering above the ocean, which

was slumbering in a profound calm. Space, literally considered, does not exist in the clairvoyant state; change of place varies with the mental condition. My mind had been in a vague and unsatisfied mood, and I had allowed it to follow out its vagaries without much attention to them. I only retained a general impression that I had strayed far from my usual paths of contemplation, and had followed an erratic and unfamiliar course. I had been thinking less of persons and places than of nature in the abstract; and so, at last, on looking around me, I saw only a silent sea, bounded by no shore and unruffled by any breeze. No ship, nor any sign of human life, was in sight. It was the dusk before the dawn; overhead were still visible some of the larger stars of the Southern constellations.



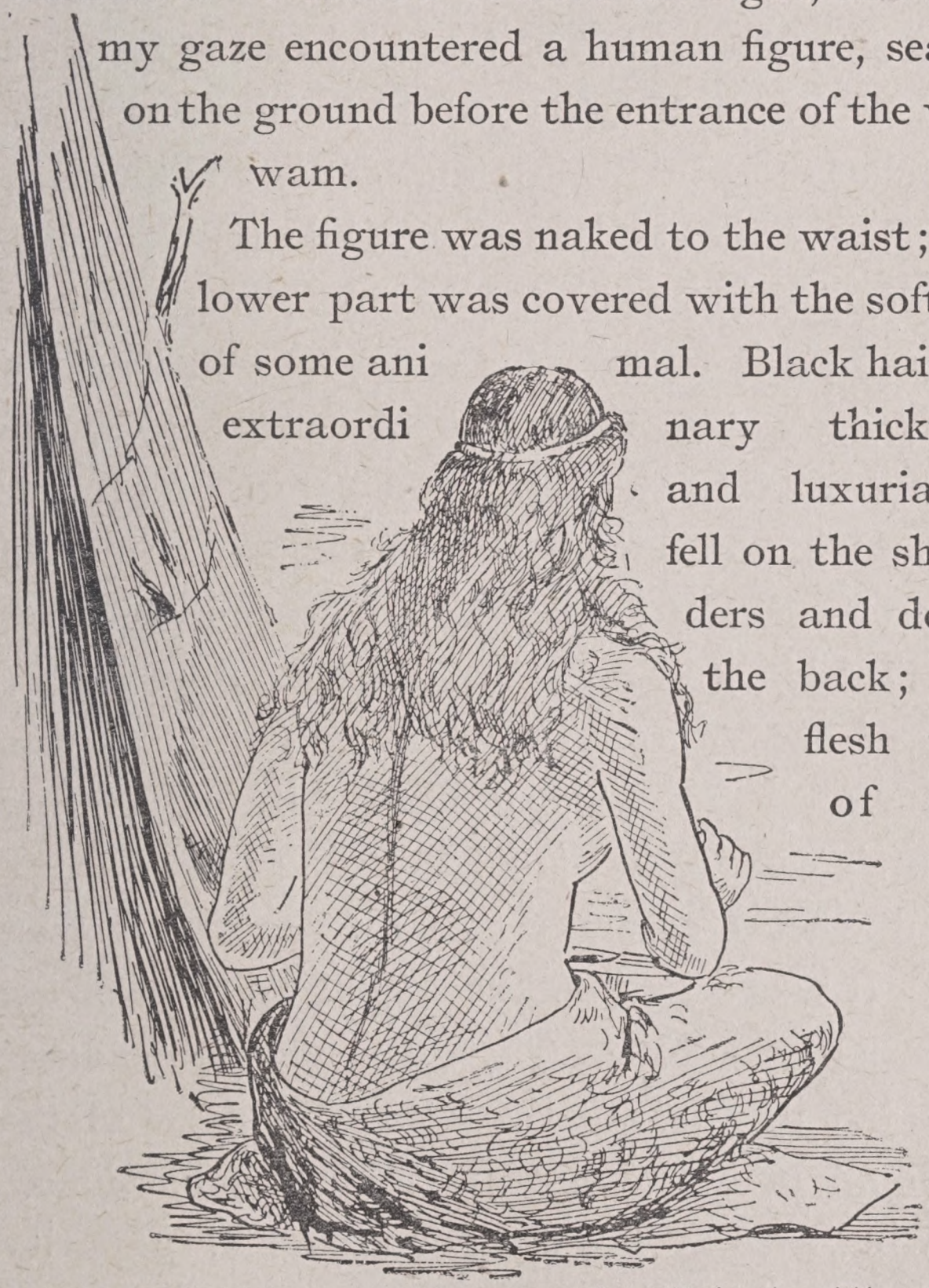
For a considerable time I remained motionless in the midst of the great stillness, with a sensation of gradually retiring, as it were, into the innermost recesses of consciousness. It seemed to me that, if this process continued, I should end by vanishing out of life altogether. I was conscious of a slow

revolving movement, winding downward in a spiral. It was evidently subjective, and was attended by a highly agreeable feeling. The spiral became smaller and smaller; at last it seemed to diminish to a mathematical point. On passing through that point, I ceased, for a time, to be conscious of any sensation whatever.

When I came to myself, I was standing on a low promontory, overlooking the sea. Behind me was a forest, composed of strange vegetable growths, with which I was not familiar. They had the height of ordinary forest trees, but were of a different character; more in the semblance of huge weeds and rank grasses. The soil on which I stood was thin, and much mingled with mosses; faces of rock, overgrown with lichens, showed through it here and there. The air was heavy and warm, and the sun, which had newly arisen, appeared red and large, through thick veils of watery vapor.

On the seaward slope of the promontory, barely a hundred yards from where I stood, appeared a small, pyramidal structure, which looked black against the eastern light. I took it to be a little cairn of stone; at all events, it must be the work of human hands, and I approached it. As I went near, I perceived that it was not a cairn, but some-

thing in the nature of a rude wigwam. It was made of skins, stretched upon a scaffolding of stakes, leaning together in an apex. Could it be inhabited? I moved toward the right, and thus my gaze encountered a human figure, seated on the ground before the entrance of the wigwam.



The figure was naked to the waist; the lower part was covered with the soft fur of some animal. Black hair, of extraordinary thickness and luxuriance, fell on the shoulders and down the back; the flesh was of the hue of fine bronze, clear and polished. The back was turned toward me; but after a moment the

position was altered a little, revealing the swelling curves of the bosom, and I saw that it was a woman.

She was engaged in moulding into shape the head of a flint axe. The tools she was using were also of stone, and the workmanship was rude. But she labored diligently and deftly and hummed a sort of chant to herself the while, that was like a concentration and rhythmical arrangement of the sounds of nature—the soughing of winds, the tinkle of waves, the moan of wild beasts, the warble of birds, the rush of the rain; but pervading and dominating all, a strong and sweet human note of emotion and love. No other music ever sounded like it in my ears; it seemed to reach the love of life, and interpret the secret of it. It was a human heart, at one with nature, uttering nature's word.

But when I saw her face, I forgot everything else. It was beautiful, but not like the faces of the women of our time. There was a lovely wildness in it, but it was not the savage wildness of the Indian. It was innocent, tender, impassioned, glowing with the fire of abounding life; in purity an infant, in feeling and development a woman. Such eyes as hers no living being had ever beheld.

They were black as night, yet clear as dawn upon the mountains: their glance sank into the soul, but they opened the way to the soul that lived behind them. Her lips were full, and modeled in curves of natural eloquence, so that their movement, even without audible speech, conveyed innumerable shades of meaning. In every physical feature she had the ideal symmetry of a Grecian goddess; and in her bearing was the wild and gentle freedom of one who had never known fear, falsehood, or reproach.

Who was she, and where was she? What land was this she lived in? And why did I feel this invincible attraction toward her, so strong as to be almost terrible? Surely it could not be love, for I loved Virginia. And yet, it must be love, and not only love, but absolute slavery—a feeling that we belonged to each other, body and soul; that we were inextricably and irrevocably one, and that, whatever other ties we might form, this tie between us was prior and superior. The conviction of this did not dawn upon me slowly; it came at once. It was an absolute and immediate identification of myself with her; we had the same soul. What did it mean? It did not give me happiness, but it bore down all opposition. I could no more strug-

gle against it than I could separate myself from myself.

The remains of several animals killed in the chase were lying near at hand. But they were all unfamiliar to me; they were not species that inhabit the earth now-a-days. The vast head of yonder bear; the gigantic antlers of the elk; the enormous curve of those tusks, with woolly hide attached to them; those other remains, half marine, half terrestrial, and monstrous and grotesque. I had seen relics of such creatures in the fossil specimens of museums, but never in life. And what was the interpretation of these stone implements, this strange forest, this dense atmosphere, this desolate coast?

The truth came upon me with a shock. I had roamed backward into the early twilight of the human race. This woman had lived and died ten thousand—perhaps a hundred thousand years ago. She was a phantom of the Astral Light. And she had thrown over me a spell of absolute possession.

Needless to say, I was invisible to her. Across that gulf of ages, of what avail to reach? Besides this that I beheld was but a shadow; she who had cast the shadow had passed on, and was now, perhaps, inhabiting another body, under condi-

tions utterly different. In the endless succession of incarnations, her soul had hidden itself, I knew not where. Only, wherever it was, that soul must belong to me, and I to her.

But how could I hope to trace her through the ages? She lived, she died, she entered into that abode of dreaming souls that the Buddhists name "*Devachan;*" and thence, after thousands of years of repose, she issued forth once more, to assume another body, and dwell in another environment. Could I find her there?

Surely no conception so wild ever visited a human brain! To return along the path of buried centuries, seeking not only a point in time, but an individual among all the countless myriads who had lived and loved since the beginning of human existence on this planet! Moreover, her second incarnation might already have occurred, and the grave once more have closed over her; or, again, she might still be slumbering in *Devachan* and her reappearance among men might not be for ages yet to come.

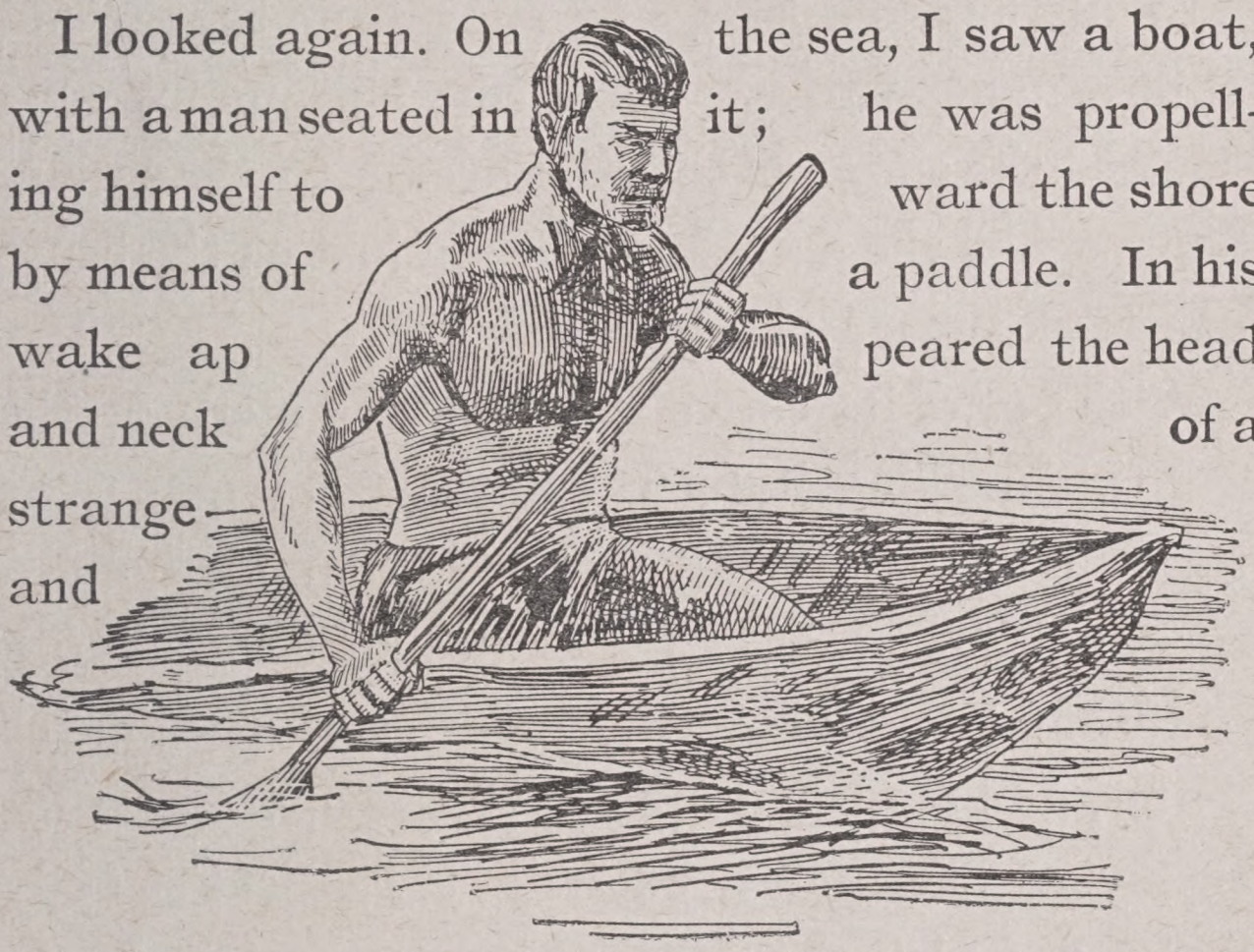
I recognized the power of these considerations; and yet, in spite of them, I dared to believe that such a search might be successful; but the ground upon which I based this hope was simply the

power of the overwhelming attraction I felt for her, and which, I thought, could not but be returned. I seemed to have known her from the beginning of time, and now, in the vast intervening period, to have relinquished my grasp of the interior chord that bound us to each other. I must have been near her when she first lived; and by the law of psychical sympathy, I must also have remained near her ever since; and wherever she was now, there must I be also, and in relations with her the most intimate. She was not to be sought for, then, in distant lands, or in the past or the future; but now and here—within reach, as it were, of my outstretched arm. And yet—where was she?

She was not Virginia, of that I was convinced. The influence was an entirely different one. And, powerful as it was, it did not, strange to say, diminish or interfere with my love for Virginia. Rather, my love for Virginia seemed to make this woman only the more undeniably mine. The two loves did not antagonize, but cemented each other; and I fancied that Virginia's love for me was as great as or greater than my own, although of another kind. I could not explain this impression, or reconcile it with any known laws of human

association; but neither could I doubt its truth. She and I and Virginia were parts of one whole, and could never enjoy full happiness save in a common union. Who was she, then?

I looked again. On the sea, I saw a boat, with a man seated in it; he was propelling himself toward the shore by means of a paddle. In his wake appeared the head and neck of a strange and



terrible animal. It was formed, in its upper parts, somewhat like a huge serpent; but, from the way the water broke against its shoulders, and from the plashing of his webbed claws, I perceived that it partook of another nature. It was hideous and formidable beyond description, and of enormous size. It was gaining rapidly upon the man in the canoe; but he was now so near the shore, that there seemed a possibility he would escape. I

would have given my right hand to help him; but what could I do?

But the woman had seen, also, and she was not idle. She leaped to her feet with the lightness of a bird, at the same time snatching from the ground a bow and arrow. Then she sprang forward toward the shore, fitting the arrow to the string. She reached the margin of the sea just as the beast overtook the man.

With one of its claws it struck the stern of the canoe, smashing it to fragments. The man was thrown into the water. He had in his hand a spear; the head, of chiseled flint, fast bound to a shaft of tough and elastic wood. He turned in the water, and made a desperate thrust upward at his enemy. The point entered the beast's body beneath the left shoulder, and there broke off. At the same moment the creature made a lunge at him, shattering his arm, and tearing open his right side. He floated helplessly in the water, and I expected to see him torn in pieces in another instant.

But the woman, with her black hair flying about her, had halted knee-deep in the water, and drawn her arrow to the head. It flashed through the air, and penetrated the monster's eye. With a roar of

agony, blind and infuriated, he lashed the sea with his tail and arms, and stretched his fearful head hither and thither, seeking his victim. But the woman had swam out to the man, and thrown her arms tenderly about him, and drawn him to the shore in safety. Then she lifted him, holding him to her bosom, and hastened up the declivity; and, panting deeply, laid him down on a couch of skins within the wigwam.

He was dying, and the end was near. When she had done all that could be done to relieve him, she sat beside him in silence, with one of his hands in hers. Their eyes met in a long gaze. I perceived, by my natural insight into their minds, that they were husband and wife, and that they were still in the early days of their union. But the long parting was at hand, and both knew it.

It was singular that I felt no jealousy of the love which the woman bore the man, though I knew it to be the utmost love of her heart, and to be the love that lasts beyond the grave. So far from that, I identified myself with that love, and felt in no way defrauded by it. I, too, loved him, though wherefore I knew not.

Presently she spoke to him. I understood what she said, though the words were such as no man,

who has lived since history was written, has heard. But my perception passed beneath the sound, and comprehended the meaning.

"Do you leave me alone forever?" she asked. "Tell me, if you may; for has it not been said that, in the hour of death, the departing soul sees what is to come revealed before his eyes; and, for that one hour, is given to know the future course of his destiny? Tell me, therefore, O beloved! and spare not the truth, out of pity for my loneliness!"

The dying man gathered together the strength that remained to him. He was a magnificent creature, made in the finest mould of manhood; and his features had the same impressive innocence of expression, mingled with nobility and passion, that I had noticed in the woman. And, as I contemplated him, methought that he, too, was not unfamiliar to me. Was it because his face, with hers, embraced the human types which had been multiplied since their day, and therefore bore, to each one who looked upon them, the likeness of a dearest friend? or was it a more real and individual resemblance? I could not tell; but, that I knew him and loved him I doubted not.

"Beloved," he answered at last, in a voice that was as faint as a whisper, which she bent to hear,

and which I heard, as it were, through her ears, "Beloved, our parting shall not be forever. God hath joined us, and our union shall never be broken. After the long rest, we shall live again, and live together. But it shall not be as we are now."

"Shall I not always be your wife, and you my husband?"

"Our bodies," he replied, "are made either male or female, and, as they are made, so do they live, and so perish. But the life of the soul is not so limited. It has in it the male, and also the female; and, in the course of its journey, it takes on the bodily garment, first of the one and then of the other. So it shall come to pass, when you and I next meet in the flesh, you shall be the man, and I the woman; and we shall have traversed the circle of human existence, and know no other separation forever."

"But shall we know each other when we meet thus attired?" she demanded.

"Truly we shall," was his reply, "and, moreover, a sign shall be given you. For when that far distant time comes, that we go forth upon the earth once more, power shall be bestowed upon you (being then in the guise of a man) to look back

into the past, and to behold what happened there as if it were still in being. And at that time you shall behold yourself and me as we now are; and in the woman you shall know yourself as you first were; and in me, the woman whom you then love. So shall you be assured that the wife that you shall have chosen is no mere companion of an earthly lifetime, but was the help-mate appointed unto you from the beginning, and who shall abide with you, world everlasting."

As his voice died away, the scene grew dim before my eyes, and faded out of sight. All was darkness and silence around me, and I knew no more.

When I came to myself, I saw Virginia's face bending over me. I had been ill for many weeks, my mind clouded with the fantasies of delirium. At first, I recollected nothing clearly of my strange experience; but, by little and little, it came back to me.

Was it a reality, or but a moribund phantom of the imagination, in which were presented, as in a

parable, the problems of self love, and of the love for another than self? I know not, nor does it greatly matter. If the woman of that primeval epoch were indeed myself, and if the man were indeed Virginia, or if both were but symbols of abstract truth, certain it is, at all events, that never was there a truer marriage than that between Virginia and me. I like to think that we have been together since the morning of time; but it needs not that to assure me that our union is for everlasting. Together we form the complete human creature, as the Creator destined it to be.

The abnormal powers which I had possessed, and which, upon the whole, had been more of a bane than a blessing, did not survive my illness. When I recovered my health, I discovered that clairvoyance, and all its attendant marvels, were, for me, things of the past. I have never regretted the loss of them. When I look in my wife's face, I see there a deeper mystery, and a more precious possession than clairvoyance can ever reveal or bestow—the mystery and the possession of perfect love.

* * *

"I'm inclined to the belief," said a red-headed gentleman opposite, in a voice which made me sus-

pect that he might be a representative of the Green Isle across the ocean, "that all phenomena of this character may be referred to the principle of hypnosis. The moment we have reduced certain portions of the brain to a quiescent state, there's nothing that mayn't happen. Past, present and future get mixed up till you can't tell one from the other. A man loses what we call his individuality, and becomes somebody else; the limitations of space are modified or obliterated; and the physical senses are replaced by a sort of universal perception which seems to act independently of the ordinary vibrations."

"It strikes me, sir," I ventured to remark, "that your explanation is not so much an explanation as a restatement of the same old mystery. In order really to account for these hypnotic phenomena, we must be able to say what the brain really is, and that involves giving a definition of matter, and indeed of the philosophy of creation itself."

"Well, man is a creature of language," replied the red-headed gentleman, good-naturedly, "and we're bound to give things names as fast as they turn up, the same as Father Adam named the beasts of the field and the birds of the air in the Garden of Eden, before you and I were born. I'm

a graduate of Dublin University, sir, and went through the usual courses; but I'm free to admit that the definition of matter and the philosophy of creation had not been subjected to scientific analysis at the time of my sojourn there. We advance by degrees, sir; we don't get to the end of the journey till we've been over all of the intermediate points. Hypnosis is a good enough word to conjure with while we're waiting for some genius to give us another; and if you and the company are agreeable, I'd like to tell you a bit of a tale of something that took place not long since in my own country, and concerning which, I may say beforehand that I was personally acquainted with two of the persons in it; and nice people they are, too, and are now living in health and prosperity, God bless 'em, not far from where we are sitting."

There was a general murmur of agreeable anticipation, and the red-headed gentleman, having rubbed his hands upward through his hair, by way of creating the electricity of inspiration, put his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, directed his eyes toward the cornice, and related this strange story:

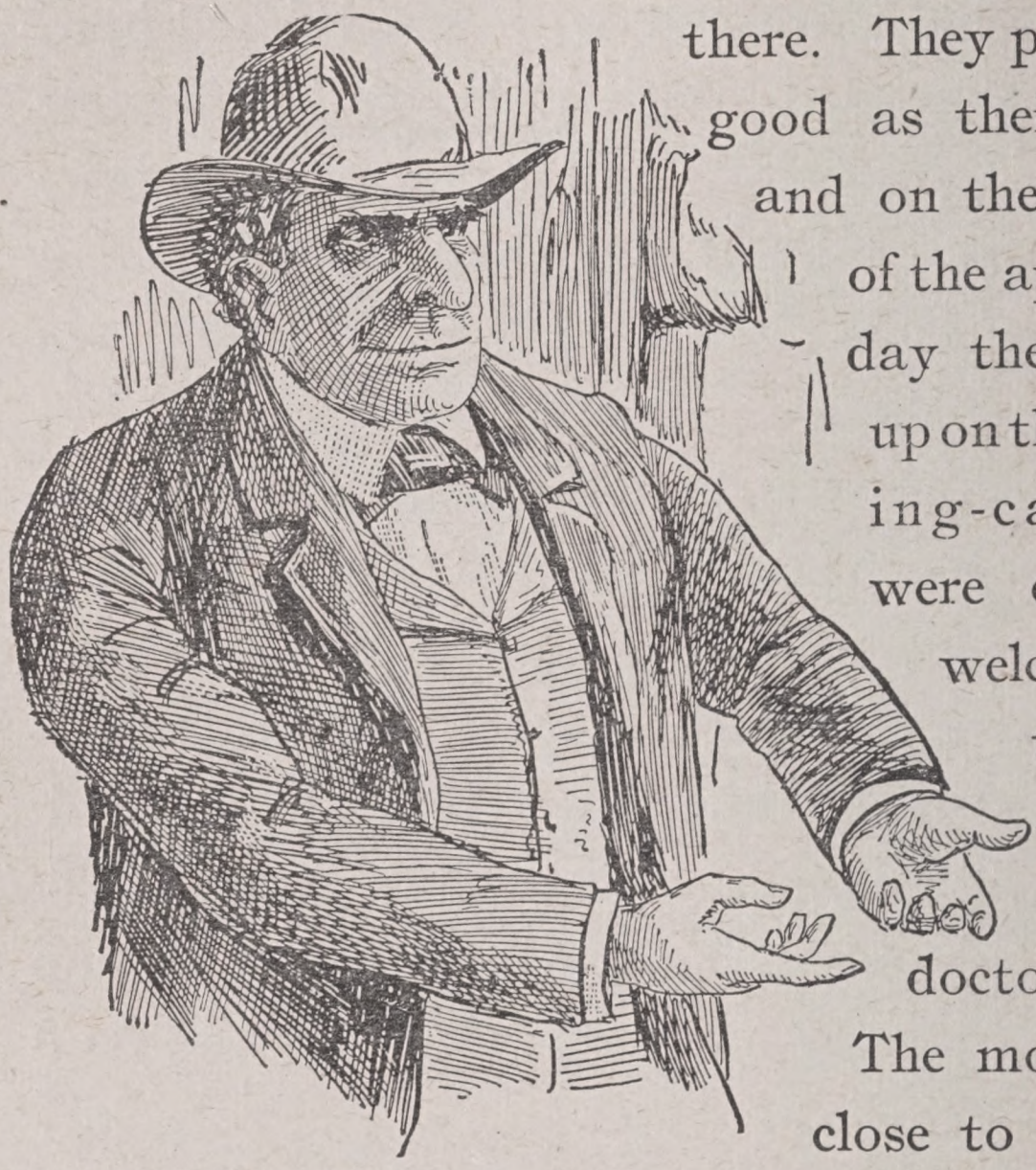
THE IRISHMAN'S STORY.

FEW people are aware of the existence of a small hostelry near Slyne Head, on the west coast of Ireland. The coal-black rocks and precipitous promontories of that desolate region render the scenery imposing; and the storms, which are frequent, form a spectacle that is nothing less than magnificent. The whole force of the Atlantic breaks against those awful cliffs, and the half-wild inhabitants of the region will tell you that, in winter, the spray is sometimes dashed three hundred feet in the air. Fishing is almost the sole occupation of the natives. The nearest railway station is at Westport, thirty miles away, whence the explorer must travel either on foot or upon the dilapidated "jaunting-car" that serves as a stage, and is driven by Pat Maguire, who is also the proprietor of the inn. But explorers are as few as snowflakes in June; and for several years previous to the date of this story, Dr. Griffith Gramery had been the only visitor.

The doctor was not a comely man. He had a big, square head, covered with grizzled red hair, which stood upright; thick eyebrows hanging far down over a pair of small but extraordinarily piercing eyes; a large nose and mouth, and a broad, short chin. His head was set low down upon broad shoulders; his arms were long, but his body rather small and short. The peasants held him in superstitious awe and respect, believing him to be in league with Satan, probably because he had once or twice exercised upon them a remarkable magnetizing power that he possessed. But as all his dealings with them had been beneficent, they mingled their awe with affection. A man may be hand-in-glove with the Evil One, and yet a very good fellow at bottom.

This season, Dr. Gramery arrived, as usual, about the first of October; but he explained to Pat Maguire that a young lady and gentleman, friends of his, would come on the seventh of the month, and would expect Pat to be at Westport railway station to drive them over. The doctor, it seems, had met Mr. and Mrs. Roger Mowbray in London during the previous season, and had sung the praises of Slyne Head so eloquently that the young couple—they were in their honeymoon

—had promised to come over and spend a week there. They proved as good as their word, and on the evening of the appointed day they drove up on the jaunting-car, and were cordially welcomed at the inn door by the doctor.



The moon was close to the full, and the air soft and mild. After supper the three friends strolled out on the cliffs; and Roger Mowbray and his wife both confessed that they had never seen so grand a sight. The rocks are full of caves, some midway in the face of inaccessible precipices, some so low down as to be covered at high-water. The coast is everywhere jagged and irregular. Slyne Head itself is a beetling pinnacle of rock, overhanging its base, which is four hundred feet below its summit. The party

made their way thither and sat down to contemplate the prospect. The ocean, rising in its vast sweep to the horizon, was luminous beneath the moon; and where the surf broke on the ragged teeth of the rocks far below it looked like great drifts of snow against the blackness.

"How glorious and terrible it is!" exclaimed Mrs. Mowbray. "After this, I can understand and almost believe in all the legends of ghosts and hobgoblins that Ireland is famous for!"

"None but spirits of light and loveliness should become visible to you, fair lady," said the doctor, who had a courtly, chivalrous way with women, which, partly on account of the odd contrast with his ugliness and eccentricity, made him a favorite with the sex. "But the people hereabouts are certainly very superstitious; and, to confess the truth, I have occasionally amused myself by playing off a few juggleries upon them. They take me for a magician; and it keeps them from bothering me when I want to be undisturbed. I have only to make a few cabalistic passes, and they run as if the devil were after them."

"I recollect your alluding, in London, to your powers in that direction," observed Roger. "You promised to give us an illustration some time.

What more fitting time could there be than this?"

"Oh, I wish you would, Dr. Gramery!" exclaimed Mrs. Mowbray. "I never saw anything of that sort."

"And I fancy your husband doubts whether anybody ever saw anything of the sort," returned the doctor, laughing, and fixing his brilliant eyes on the young man's face. "He is a skeptic."

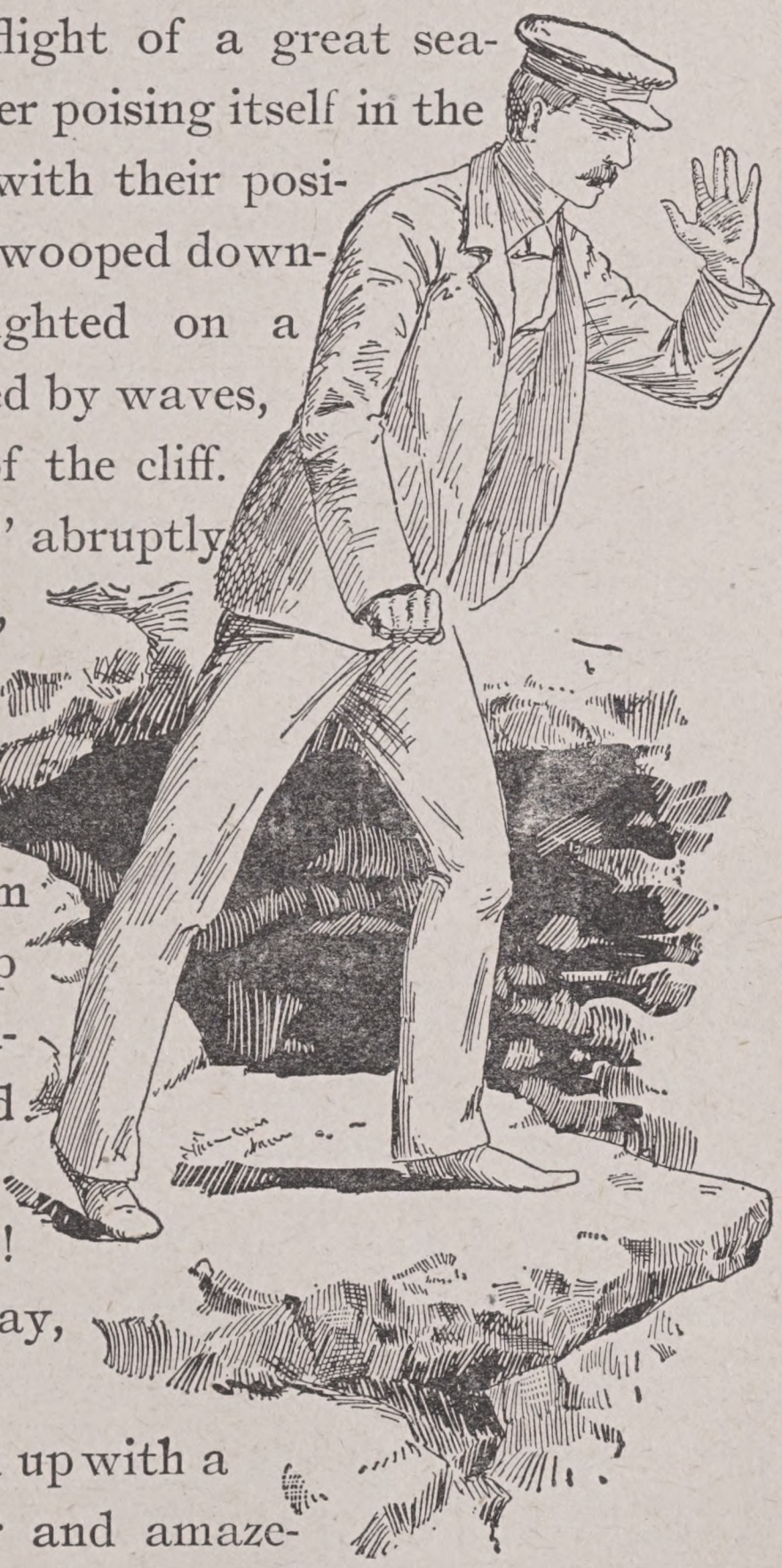
"Say an agnostic," rejoined Roger, with a smile. "I will believe what I see."

"If that be your only stipulation, I could easily astonish you," the doctor answered. "The eyesight and all the senses are readily deceived. Moreover, unless I am much mistaken, yours is a temperament that lends itself to such impressions. I should expect to be more successful in deceiving you than your wife; though she looks half a spirit already, while you have the thews and sinews of an athlete."

"Well, all I can say is, I am prepared for the test," replied Roger, still smiling, though with somewhat of an effort. The doctor's eyes had a singular sparkle. It was difficult to look away from them.

For a full minute, the doctor remained silent and immovable, gazing in a preoccupied manner at

Roger Mowbray, who gazed back at him. Mrs. Mowbray, meanwhile, had become interested in watching the flight of a great sea-bird, which, after poising itself in the air on a level with their position, suddenly swooped downward, and alighted on a rock, surrounded by waves, near the foot of the cliff.



"Look at me!" abruptly cried the doctor, in a sharp, imperious tone, springing to his feet. "I am going to jump down the precipice, and stand beside that sea-fowl. Look! Roger Mowbray, I'm off."

Roger started up with a gasp of horror and amazement. "Good God! the man is killed!" he cried out in a wild tone. He stood gazing fearfully and

breathlessly over the cliff, peering downward as if following the descent of a heavy body through the air. But after a moment he raised himself, trembling and aghast, the sweat standing on his forehead. "It's a miracle!" he said, huskily; "such a thing was never known! He fell four hundred feet, and now there he stands at the bottom, nodding and waving his hand! Merciful Heaven! what a thing to see!"

"Why, Roger!" exclaimed his wife, half laughing and half alarmed, "how absurdly you act! Any one would think you were crazy! What are you saying about the doctor being down the cliff, when he has not moved a foot away from you? Why, what's the matter with you?"

Her husband paid not the slightest attention to her. He continued to stare down at the rock on which the sea-bird was seated, emitting ever and anon inarticulate ejaculations.

"He does not hear you, Mrs. Mowbray," remarked the doctor, speaking aside to her. "He is in what may be termed an abnormally imaginative state, in which one mistakes fancies for facts. He really believes that I jumped off the cliff and alighted on that rock; and nothing that you could

say to him would change his conviction. Curious, is it not?"

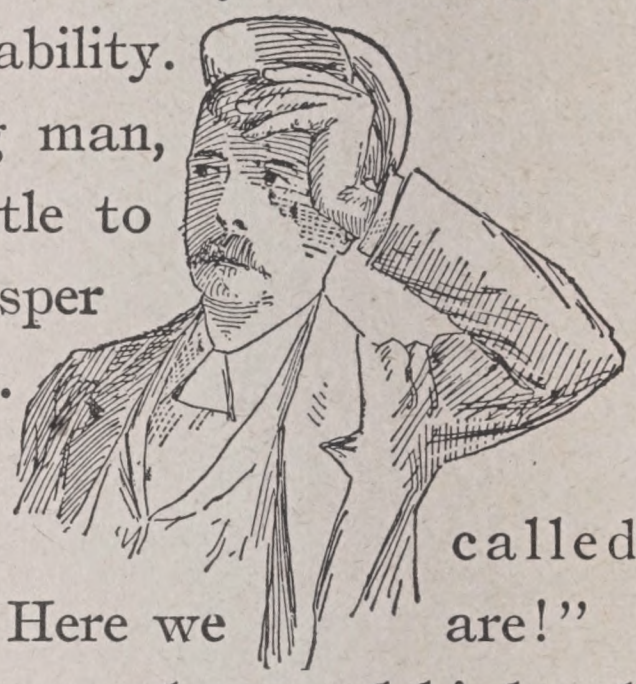
"But what is the cause of it? He was never like this before!" cried she, becoming more and more alarmed. "Can nothing be done? Roger!" She laid her hand on her husband's arm, but he moved away from her. "He doesn't know me!" she exclaimed in terror. "Oh, what shall I do?"

"My dear Mrs. Mowbray," interposed the doctor, smiling comfortably in the moonlight, "give yourself no uneasiness; it is the simplest thing in the world. Your husband is partially asleep, that is all. A certain portion of his brain—that which discriminates between truth and imagination—has temporarily ceased to operate; it has been inhibited, to use the scientific term; or, if you want another phrase, your husband is in a hypnotic trance. Of course you have heard of hypnotism, and you are aware how commonly it is now practiced, and how amusing some of its manifestations are. It also has the advantage of being entirely harmless. The trance can be broken as easily as it can be induced."

"Oh, but I don't like Roger to be hypnotized!" she protested, still agitated. "I want him to know

me and hear me! Please make him come back to me, Dr. Gramery."

"Your word is law, my dear lady," said the good doctor, with perfect amiability. He turned to the young man, and drawing him a little to one side appeared to whisper something in his ear. Then he clapped his hands sharply together, and called out, "Hello, Mowbray! Here we are!"



Mowbray glanced up, yawned, passed his hand over his forehead, and then, looking at the doctor with evident perplexity, said: "Aren't you wet? How did you get up here again?"

"You see," said the doctor, the next morning after they had talked and laughed a good deal over the event of the night before, "hypnotism is the real explanation of all the marvels of magic and enchantment that we read and hear about. The magician's first act is to hypnotize the spectator or spectators; that done, they will see—imagine they see—any miracle he may choose to suggest to them."

"Do you mean to say," demanded Roger, "that

he can put more than one person at a time into the trance?"

"A hundred as easily as one; and perhaps a thousand more easily than a hundred. Why not? Consider the phenomena of panic—the unreasoning fear that seizes upon a multitude, though each separate man of the crowd, if alone, would have retained his presence of mind; or look at the wild enthusiasm or rage to which an eloquent orator can arouse a vast audience, though any one member of it would listen to him coldly. So I doubt not it would be easier to hypnotize a large assemblage than a single individual; and the Eastern jugglers seem to do it. You have heard of the famous Indian 'Basket Trick,' as it is called? There an audience of any number of persons severally and collectively witness a transaction that their reason assures them is preposterously impossible, at the same time that their eyesight convinces them it takes place. What is the explanation? Simply, that they are all hypnotized before the trick is performed; and then, of course, the 'trick' is reduced to merely inducing them to believe that something is done which is really not done at all."

"After my experience of last night, I don't feel like disputing anything you say, doctor," observed

Roger Mowbray. "But I should like to know how a man can hypnotize a crowd of people, and also how they can recover from the trance without recognizing that they have been in it."

"If the conditions be favorable, nothing is more easily performed than hypnotism," the doctor replied. "Simply to fix the attention for a few moments is often sufficient; and any juggler can do that. I hypnotized you last night only by inducing you to look intently at me for sixty seconds. Then as to your second point, the trance may be of various degrees, from light to profound. The light trance is sufficient for complete self-deception, and the transition from that to waking is so easy as not to be perceived."

"I certainly believed I saw you jump over the cliff," said Roger, "and after I came to, I still could hardly persuade myself that you had not done it. Rachel, here, says she spoke to me, but I didn't hear her. But is it not rather alarming that such a power as you possess should exist?"

"Indeed, if I didn't know the doctor was a good man, I shouldn't feel safe for a moment," Rachel said.

"Luckily, I am harmless," remarked he, with a peculiar smile. "But there's truth in your sugges-

tion, Mr. Mowbray. Hypnotism might give terrible powers. If I had told you, last night, to jump over the cliff, you would have done it, or if, while you were still in the trance, I had commanded you to do, or to see, or not to see, a certain thing at a certain future time,—say, at five o'clock this afternoon,—you would have obeyed punctually at the appointed hour, without any further action on my part."

"Dear me!" said Rachel, with a nervous laugh, "I remember you whispered something to Roger last night, before you woke him up. What did you tell him to do?"

"You said a person could be ordered 'not to see' anything," broke in Roger. "Do you mean that a concrete object could be rendered actually invisible to one in the hypnotic trance?"

"Certainly!" replied the doctor. "Anything that is told to the patient, he is bound to believe. If I were to tell you that the big tree yonder had been dug up and carried away, it would immediately become invisible to you; and neither your sense of touch nor any other means could persuade you that there was anything there. But I see this conversation is distressing Mrs. Mowbray; let us

change it. Do you know, Mr. Mowbray, that you bear a strong resemblance to your late father?"

"I have been sometimes told so. But I was not aware that you knew him."

"Yes, I knew him well, many years ago, when we were both about your age. Afterward, circumstances separated us. When I met you the other day in London the likeness startled me; it was as if a buried generation had come to life again. Your father's wife was a Miss Clayton, I think?"

"Yes, that was my mother's name."

"Ah! I was not thinking of her as your mother. I do not trace her features in you. However, that is neither here nor there. Thinking over those old days has recalled another person to my mind—one John Felbrigge. I fancy you have never heard of him."

"I think I remember the name," said Roger, "but I never saw him. Unless I'm mistaken, my father and he were not good friends."

"They were friends until, for some reason, they had a bitter quarrel, and parted. It was the general opinion that Felbrigge was in fault. He was certainly a cross-grained fellow, whereas your father was always very suave and engaging. The quarrel occurred before your father's marriage,

and the occasion of it, I think, was some affair of the heart. Naturally, Felbrigge would get worsted there!"

"What became of this Mr. Felbrigge?" inquired Rachel.

"He was a student, and after the quarrel he devoted himself to abstruse researches, and lived on the Continent, and afterward in India. He ought to have died long since, I suppose."

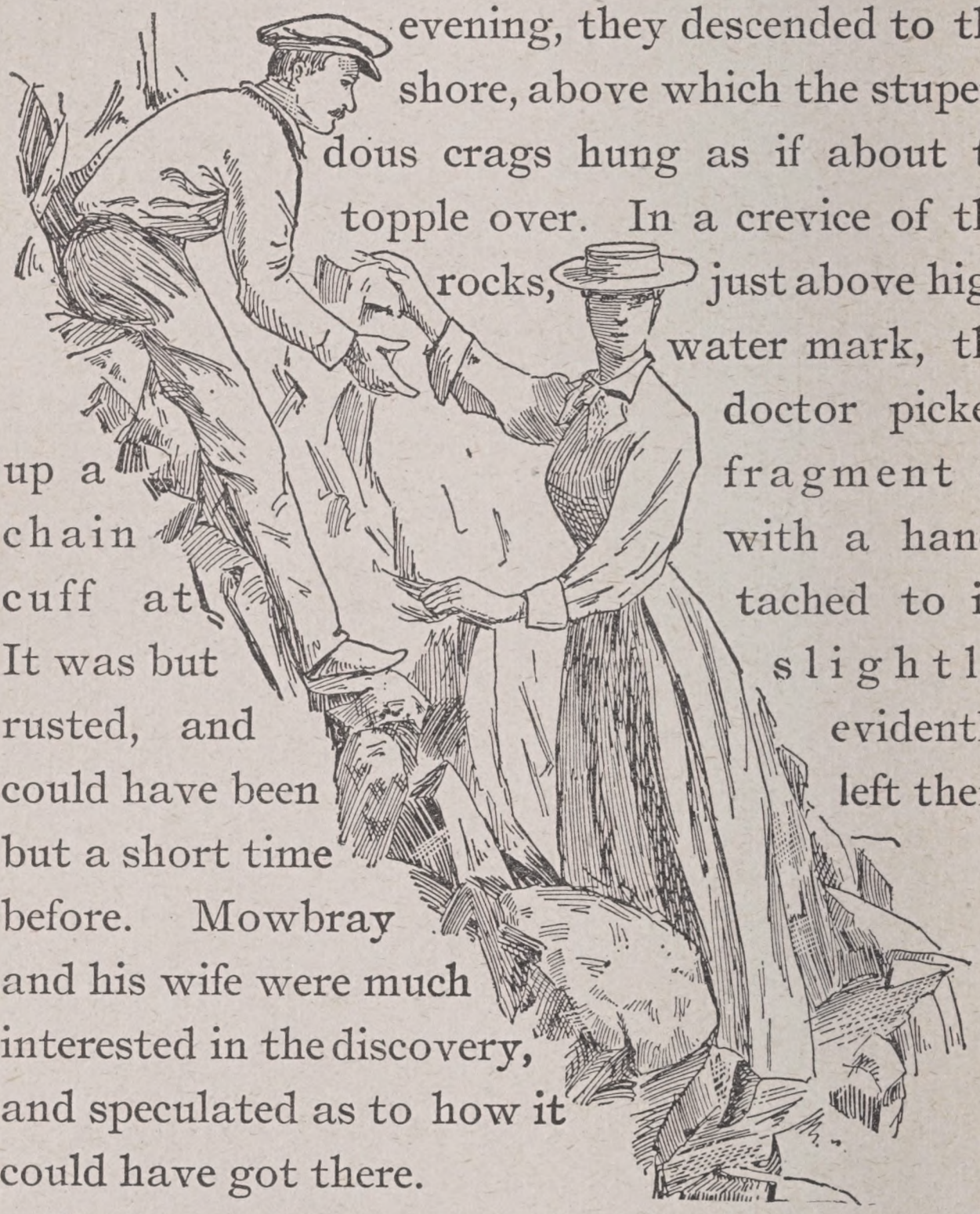
"The woman in the case was not my mother, was it?" asked Roger.

"She was not the lady your father married, I think," the doctor replied. "It was probably some earlier affair; he was a dangerous man," he added, laughing. "Now that I recollect, the other woman's name was Mercy—yes, Mercy Holland. You never knew of her?"

Mowbray shook his head.

"No, of course not!" said the doctor. "And what interest have these old stories for you young people? Come, I have something to propose! What do you say to our taking our luncheon with us, and spending the day down on the rocks? There are some curious caves I want you to see; and there is a romantic legend about one of them. Shall we go?"

The others willingly consented, and they made their preparations and set out. Instead of climbing to the top of Slyne Head, as on the previous evening, they descended to the shore, above which the stupendous crags hung as if about to topple over. In a crevice of the rocks, just above high water mark, the doctor picked up a fragment of chain with a handcuff attached to it. It was but slightly rusted, and evidently could have been left there but a short time before. Mowbray and his wife were much interested in the discovery, and speculated as to how it could have got there.



"Is there a jail anywhere in this neighborhood?" Roger inquired.

"None nearer than Galway, that I know of," replied the doctor. "But I believe there have been

some evictions going on in this neighborhood, and this handcuff may have been put on a prisoner who escaped. He must have had assistance in freeing himself from his fetters, however. This handcuff, as you see, shuts by a spring, and can be opened only by taking two hands to it. The person to whom it was attached could not unfasten it unaided. It is certainly odd that the fugitive should have shaped his course in this direction. In these thinly settled regions concealment is more difficult than in cities."

"What a strange feeling it must be to be fastened to a chain, and know that you can't get away," observed Rachel, examining the steel manacle with curiosity.

"People get used to even that," rejoined the doctor; "and after all, we are all fettered in some way, though the links may be invisible." He put the relic in his pocket, and they continued their journey along the beach. The way was rough and tortuous, the bowlders lying irregularly, and the pebbles of which the beach was composed offering a slippery and wearisome foothold. They were nearly an hour in going no more than a mile; but they were rewarded, at the end of their journey, by coming to a large cave, hollowed out in the sea-

ward extremity of a promontory that formed one of the natural divisions of the beach. Its mouth was only about seven or eight feet in diameter; but inside it expanded into a chamber of fair size and height, draped with seaweed, and pervaded by the clean, salt smell of the sea. The day had been somewhat close and oppressive, and the coolness of the cave was grateful, after their arduous walk. The interior was lighted up by the rays of the declining sun, for it was already afternoon.

Using a large flat stone as a table, they unpacked their basket, and lunched at their leisure. The doctor was in capital spirits, and made himself highly agreeable. He related many stories of his own past life and adventures; he had traveled in all parts of the world, and had lived several years in Northern India, where he had seen strange sights. Finally, the conversation got round to the spot where they then were, and the traditions connected with it.

"And, by the by, one of the best yarns is about this very cave," he remarked. "Many years ago a powerful noble lived near Slyne Head, and he married a young and beautiful woman. For a time, all appeared to go well; but finally the husband became suspicious of the attentions to his

wife of a neighbor of his who was visiting him. He watched, and his suspicions were confirmed. He concealed his emotions, whatever they were, and on some pretext invited his wife and the friend to this cave. He had had an iron ring fastened to the rock at the back part of the cave, with a chain attached to it. Pretending to be in sport, he induced them to let him fasten this chain around them, and then, telling them to be happy together to their hearts' content, and replying to their shrieks and entreaties only by peals of laughter, he bade them farewell and left them. The tide was rising, and a storm was coming on. A couple of hours later the cave was submerged, and the lovers were, of course, drowned. What do you think of that legend, Mrs. Mowbray? Would you like to know what the young people said to each other, when they were left alone, and the first wave threw its spray over them?"

"It is fearful to think of," said Rachel, with a shudder. "Was it really this very cave?"

"Undoubtedly; and if you want any further proof, the ring to which they were chained still hangs to the rock behind you. See—the sunlight has just reached it!"

Rachel turned with a start, and then all three approached the ring and examined it. It was hanging to a bolt driven into the face of the solid rock, at the furthest extremity of the cave. It was

about seven inches in diameter, and appeared to be at least an inch in thickness, though it was so bearded with green seaweed and roughened with rust and limpets that an exact estimate was difficult. At all events, it looked strong enough to

hold an ox, much more a pair of terrified lovers. Beneath the ring was a shallow ledge, forming a rude seat, and Rachel, who was fascinated by the picturesque horror of the thing, sat down upon it. The setting sun shone on her charming face, and gave it the semblance of a rosy blush. Her husband thought she had never looked more lovely.

The doctor took the handcuff from his pocket, and passed the chain through the ring, fastening it by springing one of the links over another. "That will enable us to realize the situation better," he remarked, turning to Roger with a smile, and putting the handcuff in his hand. "Imagine Mrs. Mowbray to be the lady in question, and you the wicked earl."

"Shall I manacle you, Rachel?" asked her husband, playfully.

She held out her wrist at once. "Do!" she said; "I am not afraid."

"Don't be too sure of your nerves," put in the doctor; "it might give you a turn."

"Oh, my husband will not desert me," she replied. "Put it on, Roger."

He slipped it on and fastened it. "There—now you are a prisoner," said he.

"And now all you have to do is to imagine that you are to stay there until this time to-morrow," the doctor added, "when some fisherman, perhaps, will discover your drowned and bruised body. You are looking for the last time on yonder setting sun. Do you hear the plunging of the surf? In another hour it will be at the mouth of the cave; an hour more and it will have filled it to the roof. You will be alone, and death will come slowly and frightfully. You will struggle and strain, and tug at your fetters; the steel will cut into your flesh, but you cannot break it. The cold water will creep slowly to your knees, your waist, your throat. You will scream—ah! what screams! but the rocks will echo them back, and they will die away upon the sea. You will think of the sweetness of life, of your warm and familiar home, of the love of your friends, and of your husband—and then the wave will lap over your face and gurgle into your mouth, and strangle your breath; you will be nothing but a lump of lifeless flesh, and this pleasant, luxurious world will know you no more!"

Doctor Gramery must have had a good deal of the actor's talent; he had begun his speech lightly enough, but as he went on his voice became hoarse

and incisive; he made strange gestures, and there was something terrible and ominous in his aspect. Rachel sat gazing at him with parted lips and widening eyes. As he finished she rose to her feet, and stretching out her hand to her husband, faltered: "Let me go!"

By a sudden, forcible movement the doctor interposed himself between them.

"Five o'clock!" he exclaimed, in a stern, commanding tone.

Roger stood motionless for a few moments, while a dazed expression came over his face. The doctor now moved to one side; the husband and wife were within a couple of paces of each other, and his eyes rested upon her. But there was a queer, vague look in them, and presently he said, in a sluggish tone, "Where is Rachel?"

"Here I am—here!" she exclaimed. "Here in front of you! What ails you, Roger? Take off this manacle—it hurts me! Don't you hear me?"

"It is very odd," said Roger, turning to the doctor. "What has become of Rachel? She was here just now, and I didn't see her go out. How was it?"

"Mrs. Mowbray?" responded the doctor, coolly. "Why, my dear fellow, she just went out of the

cave. Is it possible you didn't notice her? See!" he added, pointing outward, "there she stands on that rock at the entrance, beckoning to us! Come on, it's getting damp, and we shall be catching our death of cold. We have a long walk before us."

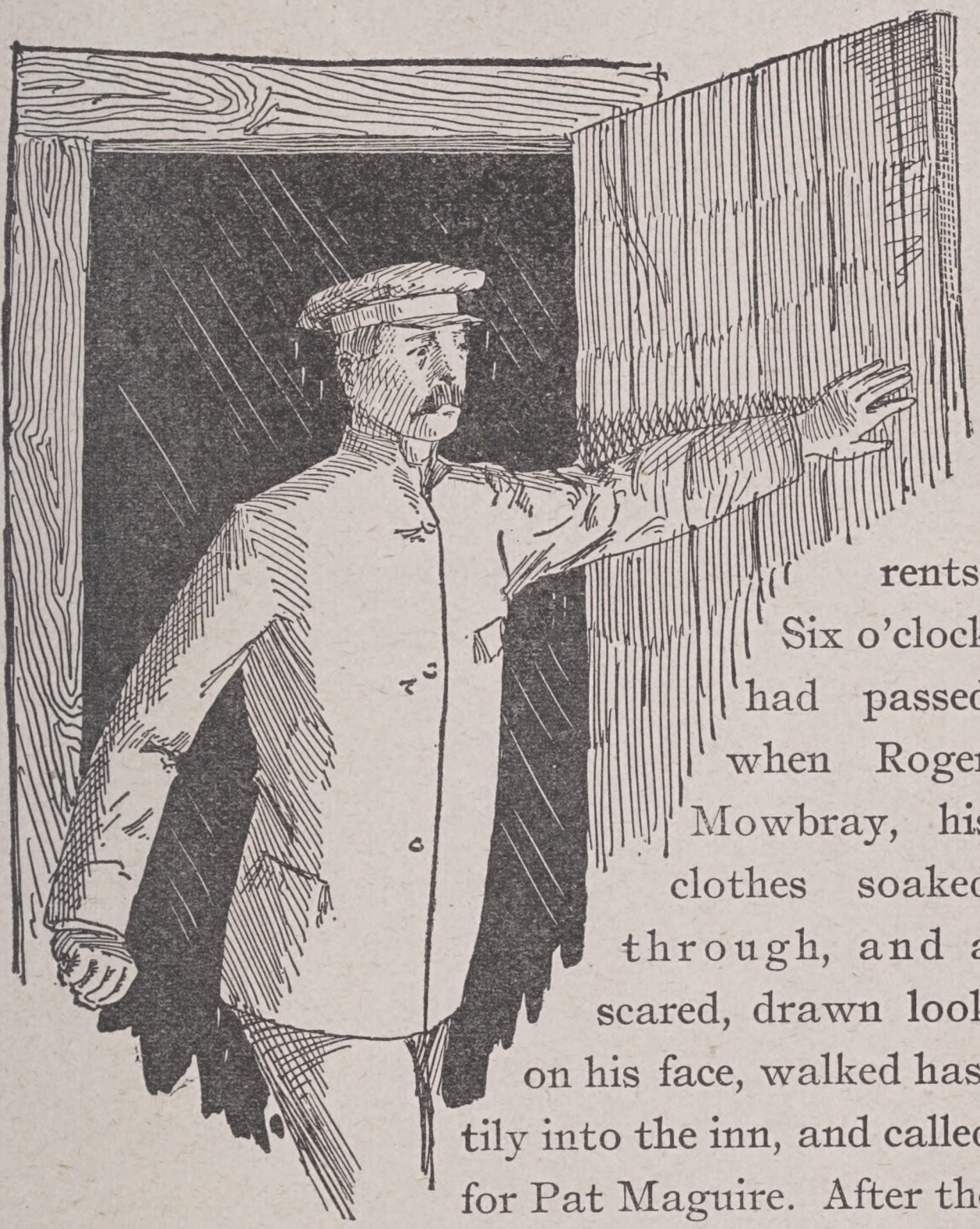
The two men moved together toward the mouth of the cave, Roger walking like a man in a dream. Suddenly a piercing shriek filled the cave. "Roger! my husband! my love! Hear me! Come to me!" Then came another shriek.

Mowbray and the doctor were now at the mouth of the cave, and the latter pointed along the beach to the right. "There she goes!" he said. "Let us hurry and catch up with her. She will stumble among these slippery stones and hurt herself."

"Oh, God!" said a husky voice, strained and unnatural. The chain rattled and strained; there was a groan. Mowbray had moved out of sight. The doctor turned and looked into the cave with a hideous expression; then he, too, vanished.

A storm had been gathering during the afternoon, and soon after five o'clock it burst over Slyne Head, with frequent crashes of thunder and

zigzags of lightning. The rain hissed down in tor-



rents. Six o'clock had passed when Roger Mowbray, his clothes soaked through, and a scared, drawn look on his face, walked hastily into the inn, and called for Pat Maguire. After the summons had been repeated once or twice, with increasing emphasis, Mrs. Maguire appeared from the kitchen, wiping her hands on her apron. "What would ye be pleased to want, sorr?" said she. "Sure, Misther Maguire stepped out an hour ago; he was after fearin' ye'd be caught in the

rain, and 't was warnin' ye to come home he'd be. Didn't ye meet him at all, at all?"

"No. Has Mrs. Mowbray—my wife—has she returned?"

"Yer wife, is it? Indade, then, she has not, sorr! Ye're the first in this night."

"Doctor Gramery—has not he got back? We parted on the beach—he took another path up the cliff. Have you seen nothing of either of them?"

"Not I, Misther Mowbray—hide nor hair av 'em. But there was a bit av a letter the doctor left this mornin', an' he was tellin' Misther Maguire to give it ye at six o'clock—not sooner. Maybe that'll explain things—more betoken 'tis six o'clock now, an' afther. Wait till I fetch it!"

She disappeared into the kitchen, and returned in a moment with a letter in her hands. Roger opened it, and this is what he read:

"ROGER MOWBRAY:—When you read this I shall have accomplished the purpose for which I brought you down here, and for which I have waited many years. You know me as Griffith Gramery, but my true name is John Felbrigge. Thirty years ago your father took away the woman I loved, Mercy Holland, and ruined her. She bore him a child; by his cruelty and neglect she died in childbed. At that time he had already married; but his wife being an invalid, and incapable of raising up chil-

dren for him, he caused you to be put forward as her son, thereby keeping the estates in the family. But you have no more right to your name than any other base-born waif of the gutter.

"I waited a long while for the proper time and means for retaliation; but when I heard that you were married, I saw my way. Last night I proved my power over you; to-day, in the cave, I shall put it into practice. At the moment you read this, your wife, chained to the rock by the manacle I have provided for the purpose, will be drawing her last breath in loneliness and agony—an agony as great, I trust, as that which your father caused Mercy Holland to endure. And you, realizing that you abandoned her there, misled by the bewilderment I put upon your senses, will understand something of the despair I felt when I knew that the woman I would have made my wife had died in shame and misery. May you live to endure that despair as long as I have done! As for me, you will never see me again. I have my place of retreat provided where I shall spend many years in ease and comfort, happy in the assurance that all I desired has been brought to pass. Blessed be hypnotism!

"Yours to command,

"JOHN FELBRIGGE."

Roger Mowbray slowly laid the letter down on the table, and looked up with a ghastly countenance. At that moment there was a hurried step on the threshold, a sound of voices, and the door

was thrown open. In swept the storm, with wind and rain; a clap of thunder shook the house; and there stood Pat Maguire, red in the face and breathless, and leaning on his arm, weak and tottering, her clothing drenched and torn, her wet hair hanging about her shoulders, her wrist bruised and bloody—there was Rachel Mowbray, rescued at utmost need, with the sea leaping at her very throat, by the worthy Irishman whom chance had brought within hearing of her final out-

cry. There she was, no phantom of a bewildered brain, but true flesh and blood, alive and safe—and in her husband's arms!

Next morning, when the storm had cleared away, the dead body of Doctor Gramery, *alias* John Felbrigge, was found lying at the foot of Slyne Head, crushed and disfigured. How he came to his death, whether by accident or design, was never known. He may have lost his way and missed his footing in the storm; or the horror of the deed he had done may have proved too much even for his iron nerves, and he sought oblivion in suicide. He was buried where he fell, and the great cliff is his gravestone; but the peasants avoid the spot, and in the roaring of the waves they sometimes fancy that they catch the fearful outcry of a lost soul.

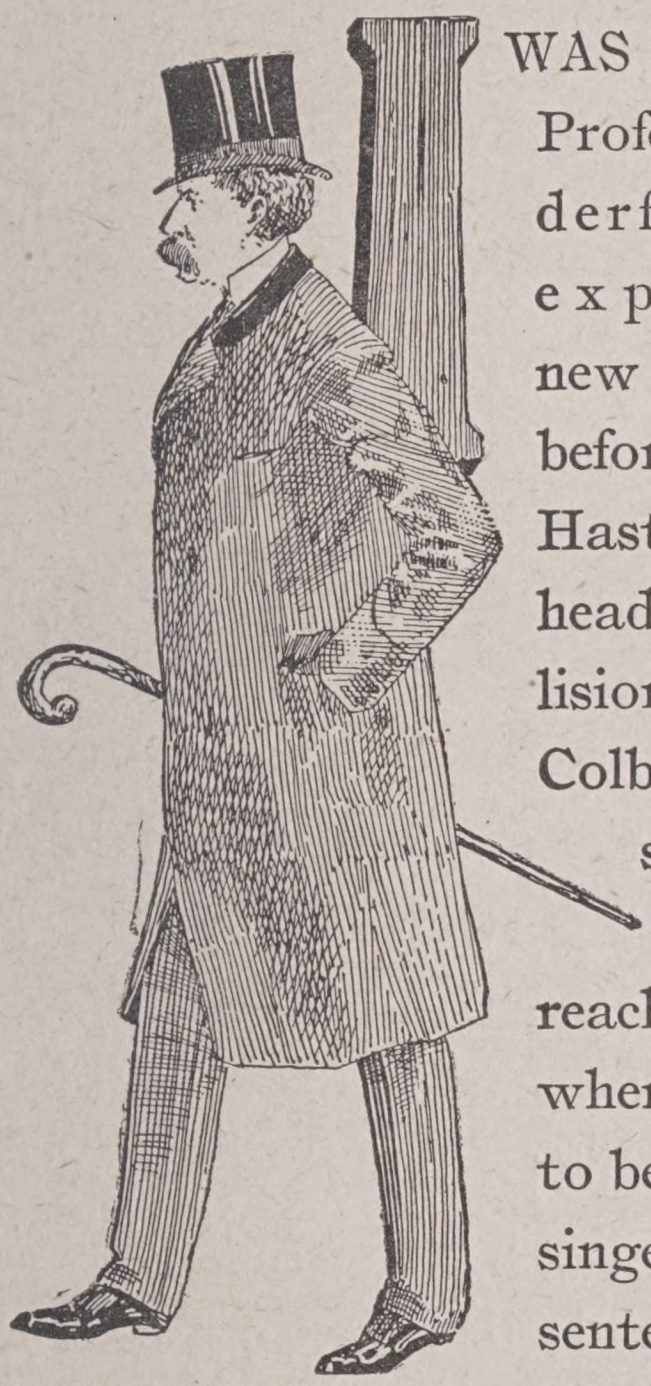
* * *

"Now, gentlemen," said Sam, noticing that some of us were beginning to glance covertly at our watches, "we're only at the beginning of the evening, and I'll have no one dropping out yet awhile on any pretext whatever. There's a bowl of punch will be in here before long, in which we'll

drink long life to Old Father Christmas, and many another good old toast. And while we're waiting for the punch to come, I think it would be no more than fair for my friend here on my right to give us an instance of some psychological phenomenon that can't reasonably be referred to hypnosis. He has challenged the last speaker's position, and we are justified in assuming that he has something more acceptable to substitute for it."

As Sam said these words, he turned in his chair and fixed upon me the penetrating and inimitable glance of those powerful eyes of his, whose compelling influence I had first felt on the occasion of my introduction to the little eating house, years ago, by the genial and mysterious Northam. I looked round the table, and perceived that Sam evidently had the house with him; there was nothing for it but to get out of the scrape as best I might. Now it so chanced that I had very lately been the witness of an incident which had caused me a great deal of speculation; it was something out of the common run, and would, I thought, serve as well as anything else to enable me to make a graceful retreat. So, without more ado, I proceeded, as briefly as possible, to tell my attentive audience

MY OWN STORY.



I WAS on my way to witness Professor Palliser's wonderful experiment. The experiment was a new one, and had never before been exhibited. Hastening along with my head down, I came into collision with my old friend Colbran, whom I had not seen for three years, though his fame had reached me from abroad, where he was acknowledged to be the greatest baritone singer of his time. He consented to go with me, and we entered the professor's laboratory together.

The apparatus was very simple; a structure of vibrating strings and resounding metallic surfaces, the whole about the size of an ordinary revolving bookstand. It was supported on a low cylinder

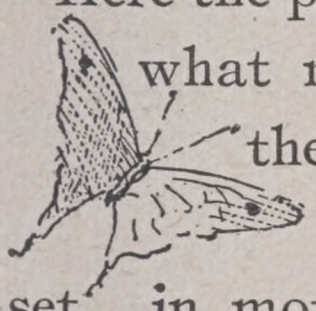
of Mexican onyx, on the top of which rested a butterfly some nine inches across the wings. It was not a real butterfly, but a beautiful and skillful piece of mechanism, as we perceived on handling it. It was made chiefly of gold, and weighed, I suppose, about eight ounces.

The professor explained to us the principle on which he was working, and told us what he was going to do. Colbran listened very closely, and seemed to grasp the central idea.

"Is not this coming very close to life?" he finally asked.

"Life," replied the professor, "implies what we call emotion. Love is the most subtle and searching of all vibrations. Between that and the etheric phenomena there is a gulf not yet bridged. I am already able to set material objects in motion by acting upon the atomic particles or molecules of which they are composed. I expect ultimately to be able to create material substances out of ether. But to instill life is a step beyond that. Life can proceed only from life, directed and energized by love. The process will probably turn out to be of the most elemental simplicity, like all things supremely great; it may be on the lines on which I

am now working. But it is still, and may always remain a mystery.



Here the professor took up an instrument somewhat resembling an antique lute, and tried the strings with a bow. Then, going to the apparatus I have described, he set in motion a small object attached to its top; it revolved rapidly on a vertical axis, emitting a clear note like a humming top. Standing in front of the apparatus, he began to play a simple tune on the lute, to which the strings and metallic surfaces of the apparatus returned a resonant echo. Several times he varied the pitch. Suddenly a penetrating, harmonious note rang out, and the golden butterfly stirred, and moved its wings. The professor continued to play vigorously. The butterfly lifted itself in the air, fluttered upward to the height of a couple of feet, remained hovering suspended there for

several seconds, and then fell slowly to the floor.

"Have you any objections to letting me try, professor," asked Colbran. "It seems to me that the human voice may have a power in this direction that would be worth studying."

"I beg you will proceed," the professor replied courteously, but with a slight smile. He replaced the butterfly on the column, and handed Colbran the lute.

"No; I shall try to dispense with that," said the latter. "If my notion has any basis in truth the vocal chords are the only instrument required."

Standing erect in the center of the room, he sent forth his voice in a note that vibrated in our ears with the clearness of a silver trumpet, but much finer in quality. He sang no words, but simply ascended and descended the scale in varying modulations. What ensued was extraordinary. The butterfly rose from the pillar, waving it wings with long, tranquil strokes, and soared lightly upward. Just before it brushed the ceiling, Colbran struck a new key, and the golden insect, as if in response to a summons, changed its course and came hovering above his head. Again a change; it flitted hither and thither about the room, now approaching, now retreating from one or other

of us, seemingly in obedience to the silent impulse of Colbran's will.

"I have promised some friends to call on them this evening," said I, when we were again in the street. "I want you to come with me, and make their acquaintance."

We were admitted to the house only to hear sad tidings. The little girl had been attacked by teething convulsions the night before, and had just died. It was the grief stricken father who told us this. They took us to an inner room, where the little body was lying on its white couch.

"What is her name?" Colbran asked, at length.

"Helen," said the mother.

"Her spirit should not be far from us, as yet," said he.

"The gulf is none the less deep for being recent," was the father's sad answer.

"There is no gulf so deep that love may not cross it," said Colbran. "Can you believe that the faith and will of united human spirits may make itself felt even by those who have passed to a sphere of life above the mortal?"

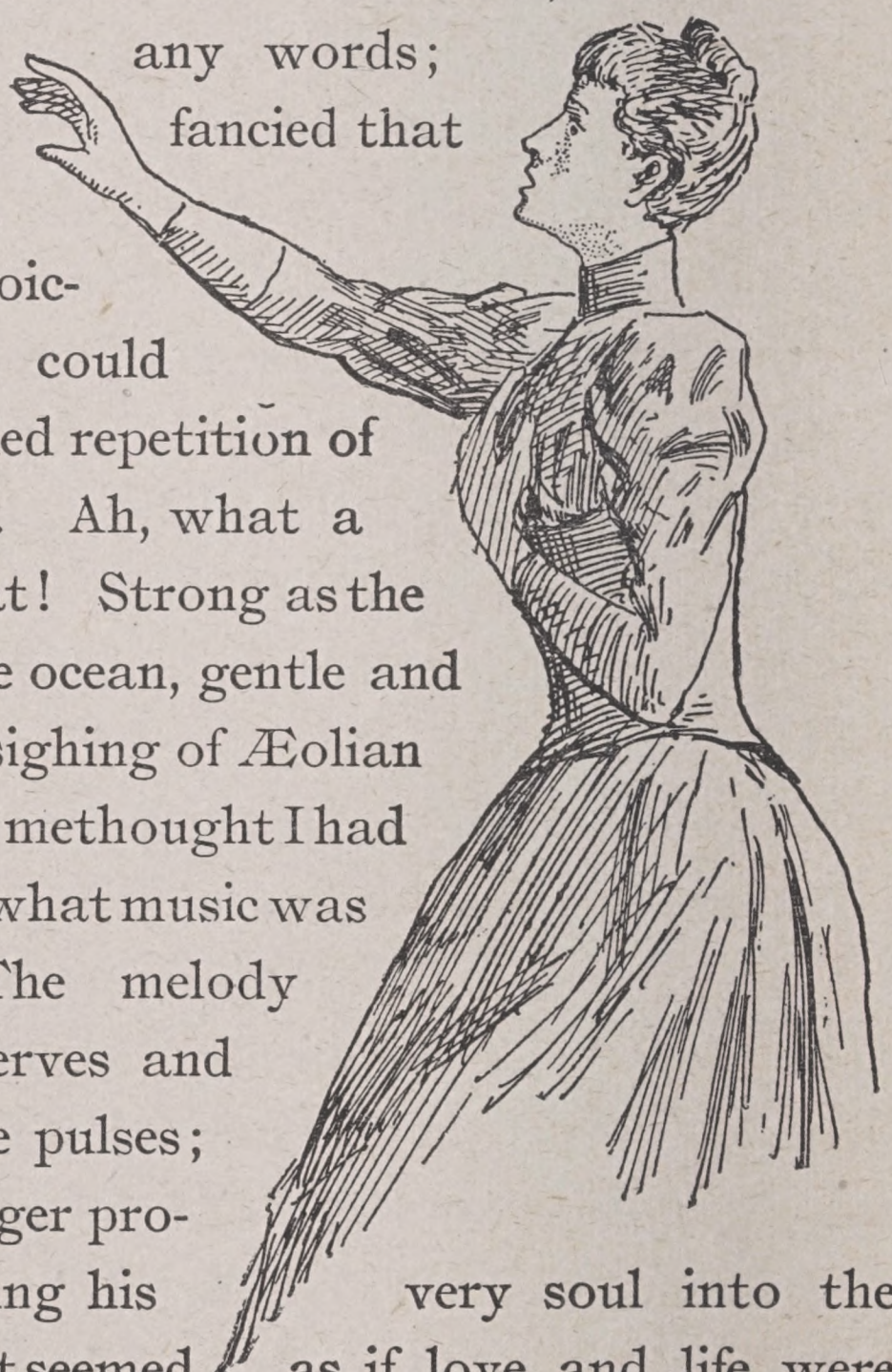
The father shook his head gloomily; but the mother, looking up at the great singer with

tremulous lips and streaming eyes, faltered out:

"I feel that she is near us; but who can call her back?"

"With God's help," replied Colbran, solemnly, "I will try."

He lifted up his head, and presently his voice vibrated on the still air. As before, there did not seem to be any words; and yet I fancied that in those deep, searching, rejoicing chords I could trace the varied repetition of Helen's name. Ah, what a voice was that! Strong as the thunder of the ocean, gentle and sweet as the sighing of Æolian harp-strings; methought I had never known what music was till now. The melody thrilled the nerves and glowed in the pulses; and as the singer proceeded, he flung his very soul into the strains, until it seemed as if love and life were come from heaven to utter themselves through his



lips. No description can convey the penetrating, reviving, uplifting potency of that song. Its power was almost awful, and yet so tender that it drew tears to the eyes—tears, and smiles such as are born only of tears like these.

And now came a piercing cry from the mother.

"She moves! She is breathing! O God! she is alive!"

I looked in awe. Slowly the pale cheeks became pink, the soft lips parted and trembled, the little bosom stirred beneath its white drapery; and as the last notes of that mighty and mysterious song died away, little Helen opened her eyes and was in this world once more.

I felt a hand on my arm, and Colbran drew me out of the room. The father and mother were blind to everything but their unspeakable happiness.

"What are you? What have you done?" I said.

The week of Christmas had begun. All the stars were out, and the chimes were ringing in the steeples.

"I know nothing," said Colbran. "Men are sometimes the messengers of God. This is the

anniversary of the greatest mystery; but, from the beginning to the end, God is with us always."

* * *

"Upon my word, sir," said the red-headed Irishman, chivalrously, "you've given us something to think of that's away above the plane of hypnosis altogether. And I tell you frankly, I rejoice in the little discussion we had, if only because it was the occasion of introducing us to your friend Colbran. Faith, he ought to be one of us."

"And now, gentlemen," said Sam, rising, "if you'll excuse me for a moment, I'll step out and see about that punch."

He left the room, and we, left to ourselves, drifted into general conversation. I began a dialogue with the unseen gentleman (who had now become visible) on the subject of Sam himself.

"As a matter of fact, what is he, and what is his end in life?" I asked. "He is all things to all men and yet he is of all men I know perhaps the simplest and most straightforward. What can be the reason that one of his ability and resource should keep a six-cent eating house and a pawn-shop? Such a man might, if he chose, stand at the head of some vast industrial enterprise; or he might, if he would condescend to such

a thing, be president of the United States. There is nothing he could not do, and do well; and yet he hides himself in such a place and position as this."

"The most powerful men in the world, there is reason to believe," replied my interlocutor, "have not always, or often, been those whose attitude in the public eye was most conspicuous. The greatest forces, both human and natural, are the invisible ones. It is not easy to overestimate how much he sacrifices who puts himself where the world can see and criticise him. The ideal life, both for happiness and efficiency, is the unseen life. What greater power has mankind developed than the power of democracy? And what power is so secret and inscrutable? Now, to my thinking, our friend Sam is the incarnation of democracy; not, of course, of that particular political party which, for temporary reasons, assumes that title; but of the essential, immortal democracy that embraces whatever in human life is free, wise, and happy. We can't measure his influence, or estimate his ability; he may seem to neglect all that we esteem valuable, and to interest himself in matters that we think trifling. Nevertheless, he is the man of the

age and the man of the future, and the circumstance that he sells cheap lunches and issues pledges for old clothing only serves to show that he represents the people instead of merely himself."

Before I had time to think of the proper rejoinder to these queer observations, the door opened and in came Sam, and—what? Yes, positively, he had a lady on his arm.

Now, the mere fact that Sam had a lady on his arm would not, as the diligent student of these reminiscences is aware, have necessarily awakened any special amazement in our minds. But that he should introduce a lady—and such a lady as this was—in that place and at that time, was certainly startling. Who was she? Whence was she? What was she here for?

After the first moment of surprise was past, we all rose to our feet as one man. Had you yourself had the good fortune to see the lady, you would have understood that this action was not the result simply of the instinctive reverence that every American gentleman feels for anything in the shape of womanhood, but was due, in addition, to the fact that this particular representative of the sex was one of those who would command respect,

service and admiration from the veriest boors that ever existed. She was a lady in the most exacting sense of the term; beautiful, graceful, gracious, distinguished, and withal charming, winning, and lovable in the highest degree.

And she possessed still another characteristic that commanded our homage. Not only did each one of us recognize in her those qualities that were to him especially attractive in woman, but also it was somehow borne in upon us all that she was singularly and peculiarly fitted to be the counterpart and fellow-being of Sam himself. She was, so to say, his interpretation and reflection in feminine form; she belonged to him by nature; and Sam, able and unconquerable though he always was, had never appeared so thoroughly himself—never so complete and satisfactory—as he did when standing there with this superb creature smiling and blushing on his arm. They were a pair, if ever there was one; and nobody was in the least unprepared for the words which Sam now uttered:

"My friends," quoth he, "I have the pleasure of presenting to you my wife."

We all gathered round them, and were made

known to her personally, one after the other. It was not long before we felt as if we had known her as long as we had known Sam. She had the art of friendly cordiality, and she seemed acquainted with us beforehand. She said to each of us the thing, whatever it was, that made him conscious that he was understood and liked. What a wonderful thing a good, beautiful, human woman is, to be sure! How she clears and sweetens the atmosphere, and calls out the best manhood of every true man! How many women are there who, coming unexpectedly in upon a party of men at the end of such a dinner as we had just enjoyed, would not have created embarrassment and uneasy artificiality? But Mrs. Sam had just the opposite effect; we now realized that the dinner would have gone for nothing had it not been crowned and consummated by this rare and delightful rose of bridal loveliness.

Well, we took our seats again, and I had the felicity and distinction of sitting next to Mrs. Sam, who sat next her husband. And now the bowl of punch was brought in, smoking and fragrant. It was the best of punches, but after Mrs. Sam, anything, no matter what, would have been an anti-

climax. However, she ladled it out to us with her own white, beautiful hands, and we all stood up to drink her health. And if that venerable ceremony has any influence at all, then it is certain that Mrs. Sam will remain unchanged by time,

sickness, grief, or any mortal ill, for the next century or two at least.

I don't know what time it came to be; but Mrs. Sam looked so fresh and rosy and hospitable that, to look at her, it always seemed as if the evening

must be only just beginning. However, I suppose at last it was borne in upon our minds that we had not been invited to breakfast, and that, if we were to go at all, we must go speedily. Then Sam stood up to say the parting words:

"My dear friends and good fellows," said he, "it is only in one sense that this can be considered a farewell. It won't be the fault of my wife and myself if we don't meet again, soon and often; our house will always be open to you, and the sooner you make yourselves at home there the better we shall like it. But this is the last time we shall see you in the room in which we now sit; to-morrow, this house passes into the possession of a new owner, and Six Cent Sam's will become a memory of the past. That chapter of my life is closed, and henceforth I enter upon a new one.

"There are more ways than one of being useful in this world; I have thought that, even in this country, where men have better chances to be useful than in any other, they were sometimes kept from it by traditions and prejudices which once were good, perhaps, but have outlived their time. Men, I thought, ought to come nearer to one another; artificial distinctions ought to be ignored, and we should attempt to bring about a brotherly

feeling, the better to fight the evil in the world and promote the good. Man is meant to stand with his feet on the earth; whoever tries to lift himself too high above it, loses strength just as much as does he who sinks beneath it. But I'm not going to preach philosophy to you, nor to relate my autobiography; you know as much of me as it is worth anybody's while to know. When, some years ago, I came to these convictions, I had been looking forward to a happiness which to-night, I thank my Maker, sits here beside me. But I thought that I should not be worthy of that happiness until I had done something to give practical proof of the faith that was in me; so I left the place in which accident and fortune put me, and lived the life which you all have seen, and in which I have been honored by your friendship.

"Now that it is over, and the blessing of my life has come to me, I look forward to no idleness and indulgence, but I feel that I have before me a greater and harder work than ever, and one that I could not accomplish without the help and sympathy of this wife of mine. We shall not give the people cheap things to eat, nor advance them money on humble security, but we shall enter into a larger and more complex society, to deal with

which more skill, knowledge, and charity are needed. I could not enter upon it with confidence alone; but with this companion beside me, I am not afraid, for she is what I most aspire to be, and she will not allow me to forget the words of the good, immortal Book, 'of him to whom much has been given, much will be required.'"

* * *

It is not very long since this event occurred; but enough time has passed to show that Sam and his wife will be as good as their word. It would need another volume to tell all that this means; but whoever has realized what is best and most real in the life of the American people, will know of what nature the contents of such a book would be.

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